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THE

TRAGEDIES

OF

SOPHOCLES,

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK:

WITH

NOTES

HISTORICAL, MORAL, AND CRITICAL;

Wherein several Mistakes of EDITORS and the old SCHOLIASTS are corrected:

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A PREFACE;

CONTAINING

A DEFENCE OF TRAGIC POETRY, AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF ITS RISE AND PROGRESS, AND A COMPARISON OF THE ANCIENT TRAGEDIANS WITH EACH OTHER.

BY GEORGE ADAMS, A.B. 1[illegible]-17[illegible]

Late of St. John's College, Cambridge.

Take you the Greek examples for your light
In hand, and turn them over day and night.
BEN JONSON'S Hor.

A NEW EDITION.

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PREFACE.

AFTER the universal applause which the learned world have given to the Tragedies of Sophocles, it would be needless to say any thing to recommend a translation of them, were all people conversant with them: yet since far the greater part of the world are ignorant and unlearned, and who, for that very reason, do not only decry dramatic, but all kinds of poetry in general, as to them it is necessary to speak in its defence. For, to what purpose is it to shew them the excellency of an author, which consists in an art which they in general condemn, as a means of corrupting men's morals, and eradicating out of their minds the principles of virtue! But I hope to make it appear in the sequel of this discourse, that this accusation is not only unjust, but that tragedy, which is the object of their utter aversion, is not only an

innocent diversion but even useful, for the improvement of men's manners and direction of their lives, by inspiring them with the love of virtue and hatred of vice, by shewing, in their proper colours, the beauty of the one and the deformity of the other; and, as men are endowed with reasonable souls, capable of choosing good, and refusing evil, by directing them to the proper objects of their choice and love, as well as of their hatred and aversion.

But here it must be understood, that I only by tragedy mean those of Sophocles and Euripides, and such as are built upon their plan, not such stuff as ignorant poetasters have imposed upon the world for tragedy since their times: who, studying more how to fill their pockets than improve their hearers, chose to compose such pieces as would gratify men's extravagant humours, as better serving their avaricious purposes.

This avarice is a fault of which not Dorsennus only was guilty, of whom Horace gives this character, Epist. lib. 2.

Gestit enim nummum in Loculos demittere; post hoc
Securus, cadat, an recto stet fabula talo.

" If the prætor paid him well for his pains in " composing his pieces, he was careless what re- " putation they had afterwards in the world." I am afraid the celebrated Shakspeare cannot be entirely acquitted from having a share in this charge, which, perhaps, was the occasion of so many gross irregularities in that poet, which nothing but his other excellencies can excuse.

This avarice of the poets brought a scandal upon the art in general, and gave ground to many objections against it, which, abstracted from its abuse, is one of the noblest arts that ever was invented.

For, not to mention the wonderful effects which have been produced on the minds of men who were present at the acting of good tragedies, how tyrants have forgotten their cruelty, the ambitious been taught to moderate their desires, the slothful to earn glory in the service of their country, (which, as it is the design, so it hath been the effect of them); what is tragedy but an imitation of the actions of men, and which, by exciting in us terror and compassion for their misfortunes, teacheth us to moderate those passions, and avoid those faults whose prevalence

may be like to carry us into the same, or misfortunes like those which we see them suffer? For instance, who that reads the tragedy of Oedipus, but is inclined to pity that miserable prince, and will not take care to avoid that rashness and curiosity which drove him into all his misfortunes? Who that reads the tragedy of Ajax and his sad fate will not pity him, and resolve against being overcome by his anger and rage, the miserable causes of it? Again, the tragedy of Antigone is a good lesson for arbitrary princes to take care how their laws interfere with those of God and nature, and how they put their sanctions in execution against the transgressors of them.

Nor are the rest of the tragedies of Sophocles without their morals, to teach men to reduce their passions to the subjection of their reason, and to avoid those faults, which are the occasions of misfortunes to the principal characters; and, lastly, (that which is the design of perfect tragedies,) they set before our eyes the misfortunes which men fall into by their involuntary offences, and so prepare us to bear our own misfortunes with patience, when we consider how light they are in comparison of

theirs whom we see represented upon the theatre. When we see represented the miseries of Oedipus and Philoctetes, we see that neither greatness nor innocence are sufficient to secure us from the calamities incident to man: and when we compare our own condition with theirs, and consider how little they deserved the fate they suffered, it encourageth us with more cheerfulness to combat the storms we meet with, in our passage through the raging waves of this troublesome life.

There is a very pertinent reflection to this purpose made by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, cap. vi. lib. 9. " Tragedies," says he, " were first introduced " to put men in mind of those accidents which " happen in their lives, to inform them that they " must necessarily come, and teach them that those " things, which they see with some delight on the " stage, should not appear unsupportable in the " grand theatre of the world; for you see plainly " that such ought to be the catastrophe of all " pieces: and those who cry so much on the thea- " tre, Oh Cytheron, do not deliver themselves from " their own evils." Though this is said only in respect to one effect of tragedy, namely, the re-

fining terror and compassion; yet it shews how high an opinion even a Stoic had for this art.

The other excellencies of it I shall make out by a comparison of poetry, of which tragedy is the noblest kind, with the other two sciences which are chiefly reckoned to contribute towards the polishing of mankind, and instructing them in the way of their duty, in order to present and future happiness: and those are history and morality, where I shall shew how far poetry excels them both, and is more conducive to that purpose. Other sciences, as metaphysics, arithmetic, and astronomy, being only subservient to the other, cannot presume to enter the list in this dispute.

For example, astronomy consists in observing the order, harmony, and contrivance, of the celestial bodies, their steady revolutions, and the various seasons of the year thereby produced; and though it helps to instruct men, it doth it not directly by its own power, but mediately, *i. e.* by giving us high and noble sentiments of God, shewing that he is great and powerful in all his works, that he is a God of order and harmony, and, by conse-

quence, that he requires it in man, the noblest part of the creation, which consists in keeping his passions under the subjection of reason, (for all vice is nothing else but the effects of the irregularity of men's passions,) and shewing that, as he is powerful and just, he will certainly punish such disorders and irregularities in rational creatures. For the same reason metaphysics, which consist in contemplation of the nature of spirits, are subservient to the same ends, (as may be said of all other sciences that can be thought of, except divinity,) *i. e.* the instruction of men, and making them what they should be; which are the direct and immediate ends of history, morality, and poetry. For divinity, that must always be excepted, whose present design is to establish the truth of revealed doctrines of the utmost importance, with respect not only to this life, but even to an eternal one hereafter. What I am therefore to prove is, that poetry is more edifying and instructive to man, in order to a due regulation of their lives, than either history or morality. First then as to history: what is it but a faithful narration of the actions of men, and other accidents, with their circumstances? But it is defec-

tive in this particular; for although it may give us instances of persons who have suffered by their vices, or any other causes with which we are unacquainted; yet, in giving us those instances, it still leaves us ignorant for want of precepts, to teach us how to behave ourselves, should any of those cases happen to be ours: for, although we might guess at the cause of a person's sufferings, as a proud man, a tyrannical king, &c. we cannot affirm that his pride or his tyranny were the causes of those sufferings, nor can we affirm that he would not have suffered such things had he been otherwise. Some folly or indiscretion, or other thing which we are ignorant of, might have caused his misfortunes, which, had he avoided, he might still have prospered very well in his other vices: so different are the causes of all things which happen, and so obscure the paths to trace them out.

If, indeed, an historian, in the description of a character, tells us what is to be done and what avoided, he then enters upon the province of the moralist or poet. But the events of history, as such, are far from instructing men, or affording them any general maxims for directing their lives.

For instance, what moral is to be drawn from a cursed usurper dying in his bed, and a just king murdered by his subjects? A just Cicero and true patriot of his country suffering a cruel death from an ambitious Anthony? The just Cato besieged and forced to lay violent hands on himself, while rebel Cæsar's name lives with honour? So that it is impossible to draw any general maxims from particular events, and those bare matters of fact which historians are obliged to relate. Morality labours under the same defect, for although a moralist may define prudence, justice, temperance, and other virtues, with their opposite vices, and by many convincing arguments, drawn from the nature of things, shew us how much one is preferable to the other, yet he wants example to enforce those precepts, to shew how persons by their virtue have been happy in their lives, and glorious after death; and again to shew into what calamities particular persons have fallen by the prevalence of those vices they are declaiming against. But a judicious poet takes in both precept and example, for, as he is purely the maker of his own creature, he forms him as he pleases, and represents to us such persons as drew on themselves their own misfortunes

by their vices and follies, (as Sophocles doth in the tragedies of Ajax, Oedipus, Trachiniæ, &c.) or who rendered themselves the objects of our admiration and praise, as Ulysses and Theseus. We see nothing in any of those characters, but what is to be done, or what avoided; for the poet shews us what vices or follies were the next and immediate cause of the sufferings of the one, and what virtues gained the other praise. Oedipus is represented as a prince, who, though he had many excellent virtues, as justice, courage, and tenderness for the welfare of his people, yet fell into his misfortunes by his prodigious rashness and curiosity: and, by his conduct in a particular instance, the poet instructs us to avoid those faults which brought on him his misfortunes.

The same may be said of Ajax, who is represented as a person whose wrath and malice ruined him; and of Deianira, who was undone by too great credulity, and giving way too much to that weak passion of jealousy. On the other hand, the character of Ulysses is distinguished by several excellent qualities, as his prudence in composing the strife between Agamemnon and Teucrus, his placable and forgiving temper toward Ajax.

The character of Theseus, in Oedipus Coloneus, is likewise the draught of a righteous king, neither terrified by threats nor allured by flatteries from executing justice among his people, when the complaints of the miserable call for his assistance. In any of these cases we cannot possibly fail of knowing how to behave ourselves when we read those poems, should we fall into the same or the like circumstances with the persons there represented. For they are so represented that their words and actions speak the men, and thereby of necessity render them the objects of our love or hatred; and what we love or hate in another will have some effect upon our own conduct: whereas the moralist only discourses of virtue and vice in a methodical way, defines them according to their subjects, causes, and effects; and enlarges upon each division, but is destitute of example, to shew where those virtues or vices are displayed. And the historian confines himself to strict matters of fact, but shews us not how they ought to influence our conduct. A poet, according to his name and the import of his office, being derived from the Greek word Ποιητὴς, a creator or maker, is only to shew men what they should or should not be, not what they are or are not, as the

historian doth, and therefore he cannot fail of laying down proper instructions for the conduct of life, and shewing in others what they ought to do themselves. And thus he answers those ends which both historians and moralists propose, yet labours under none of those defects which they do; for, as hath been shewn, he gives us the particular instances wherein they have been rash or imprudent, cruel and outrageous; or, on the contrary, wise, just, and pious, and the motives upon which they proceeded, and how they behaved themselves in such circumstances, and the consequences thereof, which must needs afford matter of great use and application to the hearers. This is no new observation, but what Horace hath long ago made, who tells us, that Homer instructed men what to do, and what to avoid, better than either Chrysippus or Crantor. Ep. ii. lib. 1.

Qui, quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius et melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit.

Now of all kinds of poetry tragedy is confessedly the noblest, and therefore better answers this end. Our modern tragedies are, indeed, far less instructive than those of the ancients in this way,

for want of the chorus, which the other had, whose office it was to make moral applications in their songs, from what was said by the actors in the foregoing episode, in which they always conformed themselves to the rules of that religious worship, which was in vogue among them. I shall give the reader the following instance, as a proof of this truth, out of Oedipus Tyrannus.

Jocasta, thinking that the oracle, which foretold the fate of Laius was false, viz. that he should be murdered by his son Oedipus, whom she believed to be dead, little thinking that that servant to whom she delivered him did not execute his orders, out of pity to the child, speaks in a contemptuous manner of all oracles in general, and says, that there is as little reason that we should believe that part of the oracle which declared he should commit incest with his mother, or any other oracle whatsoever, as that which she had already proved false.

This, from the mouth of a queen, might be of very pernicious consequence to the hearers, by tending to beget in their minds a contempt of all religious worship. The chorus, therefore, to prevent the

natural effects of so bad an example, and preserve in the minds of the audience a due reverence for religion, declares there is a terrible god that will punish all impiety, either in our words or actions, and prays that he would not revenge the impiety of Jocasta on that city. Act iii. scene 5, "May "the gods grant me to enjoy a happy state," &c.

The way, therefore, to make our theatres as instructive as the Athenian was, is to restore the chorus, and for ever to banish from the stage such stuff with which it is daily pestered. I shall not however take upon me to dictate so far, as to say what should or should not be done here in this kind among us, who live under so wise a government; but leave it to those of better judgment and greater power, whether so considerable an innovation be convenient or not; but shall proceed to answer two grand objections which are brought against the use of tragedy: the first is, that it is only suited to a state of heathenism; the other, that it is very much abused; and the answer which I shall make to these shall be not only sufficient to confute these objections, but likewise farther recommend this kind of poetry. The former in its full

force and vigour is thus. Although it should be granted, that, in a state of heathenism, when mankind had but imperfect notions of a future state, and the wisest of the philosophers doubted whether there was any such thing at all or not, such helps as tragedy might be very useful to help the philosophers by fables and similitudes, and make out what they could not in the reformation of men. Yet to us, who live under the dispensation of the Gospel, a most perfect rule of faith and obedience delivered by our great prophet Jesus Christ, and are assured by the most convincing arguments of the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments, what occasion can there be for any such helps as tragedy; since the Holy Scriptures afford all the arguments that can be desired to persuade us to embrace religion and virtue, and abhor vice?

It is true, were it so that the precepts of the Gospel had their intended effect, and we saw that all men lived according to them; that is, were every man really what he should be, then indeed all theatrical recreations were useless. Yet, since experience informs us that the case is quite otherwise, and we often see men fall into the greatest

inconveniences, through one predominant passion or other, why should we slight such helps as can be any way conducive to so good an end, as the subduing those passions to the government of reason? We have the examples not only of the prophets, but of our Saviour himself, to authorise a parabolical way of instruction, which they often had recourse to, rather than precept. Nathan in particular brought David to repentance by a very remarkable parable. See 2 Sam. xii.

We have likewise many parables of our blessed Saviour in the Scripture; yea, we read in one place that he so far preferred it to precept, that "without "a parable spake he not unto them," *i. e.* his disciples. Now, every tragedy hath its fable or parable, which is the same, and every parable its moral instruction, for that is the end of all fables, as I have already instanced in the tragedies of Oedipus, Ajax, Antigone, &c. For they are not told as truths, nor doth the poet design to impose his fictions on the world as such; yet, though they are not in themselves true, the application and moral instruction which they design is most undoubtedly so: if anger destroyed Thyestes, Ajax, and others, rashness

and curiosity Oedipus, the sad effects of jealousy Deianira, and severity Creon, we may reasonably conclude, in the ordinary course of things, that where the same passions prevail, they will always have the same effects. And although there had been really no such persons in the world as are here mentioned, yet the application is general to all; and it is most probable that persons of such manners should do such actions, and that such actions should produce such consequences. Now, if men, who are slaves to their passions and abandoned in their morals, can be reclaimed, what matters it whether it be done by a poet or divine? If a cruel persecuting tyrant is reformed, and becomes a pious prince, careful for the welfare of his people, what matters it whether it be done by hearing a tragedy of the terrible sufferings of a people under a tyrannous government; or, by hearing a sermon, setting forth how God is merciful to all his creatures in general, and that he requires the same temper in men toward their fellow creatures, and the punishment which waits the opposite vice in a future state, &c. As to the latter, I am aware of an objection, that there is a duty in the very act of hearing sermons, which is not in the other: I grant it;

yet that hearing is in order to a better end, viz. to be instructed in the will of God and the way of our duty, Rom. x. v. 14, &c. But, if hearing doth not answer that end, it will be so far from standing us in any stead in the day of account, that it will rather be an aggravation of the condemnation of such stony hearts, in which the good seed of the word was sown in vain: and if hearing a tragedy hath often wrought the minds of men to that Christian temper, which preaching could not, I see not why the use of so good a help is not both lawful and commendable.

The usefulness of this diversion will farther appear, if we look back and trace it from its original, and consider the design for which it was first invented, viz. to afford pleasure and profit to its hearers. When the philosophers found that it was impossible for them to form men, such as they would have them to be, by the precepts of philosophy, they were forced to have recourse to tragedy; which was therefore invented, not as the best employment that men could take up, but as a means to correct the excess in which they plunged themselves at their feasts; and to render those amusements profitable,

which custom and their infirmities had made necessary, and their corruption very dangerous. So that tragedy was designed both to satisfy the natural curiosity of men, and that inclination which all have to gratify themselves with some kind of recreation, and at the same time to instruct them; and that very reason, that it doth so, is sufficient to justify the use of it. Moderate recreations are by no means unlawful or contrary to the word of God, but rather authorised by it. God did not give men inclinations, but such only, the gratifying of which are lawful, provided they regulate themselves by the measures of prudence and sobriety; and it were heartily to be wished that those libertines, who complain of the yoke of religion, would, instead of their customary criminal indulgence of their passions, betake themselves to this kind of diversion.

The other objection against tragic poetry is, that it is very much abused. This must certainly be granted; yet this objection, however true, cannot lie against what I here contend for; since, as I said before, I would be here understood to mean only such tragedies as are built upon the plan of the ancients, Sophocles and Euripides, and according

to those rules laid down by Aristotle and Horace; not such abominable stuff as our English theatres have been crowded with since their times, where the spectators have been entertained with tedious scenes of courtship, abusive language to the clergy, ridiculous contradictions, abominable fustian; yea, we have instances of their prophane flights of thought, little better than blasphemy. These were faults which Dryden and Lee fell into, who have been followed herein by several other poets since their time, for which they are justly, though severely, scourged by the ingenious Mr. Collier. What an abominable character doth Dryden give us of Nourmahal, in that scene where she discovers her unnatural love for Aurengzebe? How doth she talk like a woman lost to all shame and modesty? The ancients never ran into errors of this nature; for though Phædra, in Euripides, is in love with Hippolytus, yet her honour, throughout the whole play, so far prevails over her love, that it ties her tongue from the least immodest expression.

Shakspeare, however faulty in other things, yet had none of this; we do not find his plays stuffed with any such tender sentiments between the diffe-

rent sex before marriage, which must be shocking and uneasy to the fair sex, and offensive to that modesty which is no less an ornament to them than their beauty. Juliet and Desdemona are both married, before they make any acknowledgements of their love. We have likewise passages in several of their pieces, where they abuse the clergy with most insolent language, of which the behaviour of Chamont to the Chaplain, in that celebrated play called the Orphan, is one instance; and that of Oedipus, in Dryden's play of that title, toward Tiresias, is another: where the poets have, with impudent language, abused, not only those persons, namely, the Chaplain and Tiresias in particular, but even railed against the sacred function in general. If it be not raking from too foul a channel, I shall cite the passages from the authors. Oedipus, act iii.

Oed. Who were my parents?
Tir. Thou shalt know too soon.
Oed. Why seek I truth from thee?
The smiles of courtiers, and the harlot's tears,
The tradesmen's oaths and mourning of an heir,
Are truths to what priests tell.
O, why hast priesthood privilege to lie,
And yet to be believed?

And, in the Orphan, act iii. Chamont says to the Chaplain:

> Nay, but th' art an hypocrite; is there not one
> Of all thy tribe that's honest in your schools?

And afterwards:

> If thou wouldst have me not contemn thy office
> And character, think all thy brethren knaves,
> Thy trade a cheat, and thou its worst professor.

Afterwards, Chamont, seeing the meekness of the Chaplain, in bearing this language without shewing any great signs of resentment, returns to his former style, and reproaches him with the most vile, the most scurrilous language that impudence and rage could dictate.

> Curse on that formal steady villain's face.
> Just so do all bawds look; nay, bawds, they say,
> Can pray upon occasion, talk of heaven,
> Turn up their goggling eyeballs, rail at vice,
> Dissemble, lie, and preach like any priest.
> Art thou a bawd?

But it were needless to produce a few passages of this kind, and those only to be found in the writings of authors long since dead, were not their example too closely followed by the author of a play too

well known, and frequented too, to be named here; to the shame of the corrupted taste of our nation, and disrelish of the admirable beauties of the ancients.

The lawyer beknaves the divine, &c.

And now let any man judge, whether it be fit that men in holy orders, to whom are committed the oracles of God, whose particular business it is to promote the honour of God, and set forward the salvation of all men, should be treated with such language. And I believe all men will allow, that there is no more effectual way to serve the causes of the atheist and infidel, and to bring religion into contempt, than to infuse into men's minds a contempt of its teachers.

These and such like abuses brought this scandal upon all dramatic writings in general, that they were only invented by the poets to get money, and enrich themselves by the follies and vices of mankind. But what can be more unjust than to banish the true coins out of the world, because of counterfeits? For such are certainly that kind of tragedy I have now mentioned, with respect to what is truly and properly so called.

Is it an argument that we should never follow the directions of a skilful physician, because some ignorant pretenders have killed their patients by medicines improper for their disease? This was not because they were physicians; but because they were nothing less. And yet just so much reason have we to reject the use of right tragedy, because it hath been abused and perverted to base ends. For nothing can be more opposite to right tragedy than what ignorant poetasters have imposed on the world as such; nor can any thing be more unjust than to condemn it, for no other reason but because of that abuse; and those who do condemn the most noble diversion in the world, a diversion which awakens the genius of men, searches to the inmost recesses of the soul, finds out those virtues which lie hid in the smooth seasons and calms of life, and sets them upon actions truly noble and praiseworthy. It touches the most obdurate soul; and makes it melt to behold the sufferings of our fellow creatures. I could give many proofs of this truth, but shall at present only trouble the reader with the following.

Alexander, a cruel tyrant of Pharæ, in Thessaly, being at the theatre when the Hecuba of Euripides

was acted, was so sensibly moved, that he went out before the first act was ended, saying, he was ashamed to be seen to weep at the misfortunes of Hecuba and Polyxena, when he daily imbrued his hands in the blood of his citizens. He was afraid that if he stayed longer his heart would be mollified, and forced to quit that spirit of tyranny, which was destructive to so many of his citizens: and the actor escaped with his life only through those small remains of pity he had raised in his breast, who had been so long a stranger to it. Collier himself, who was so violent a scourge of dramatic poetry, yet allows it to be the most useful thing the wit of man can invent, for the promoting of virtue and the discouragement of vice: and certainly if ever any hath been written without respect to this end, either the avarice, ignorance, or laziness of the poets have been the occasion of it, and not any defect in the art itself.

But it is time that I speak in particular of the tragedies of the ancients, since they are the true models according to which every good tragedian ought to write, as being not only according to Aristotle's rules, but even those upon which he grounded

his rules; that is, in the state tragic poetry was left by Thespis. In prosecution of which design, I shall give my reader a short account of its rise and progress, and what improvements it gradually received until it arrived at that perfection to which it was brought by Sophocles; and from thence shew what vicissitudes it underwent, sometimes being eclipsed, and again recovering its ancient lustre, until the later ages.

Then I shall mark out the particular excellencies for which the three great heroes of tragic poetry, namely Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, are most eminent; and the faults for which they are most defective: and upon the whole shew, that the preference to the other two is due to Sophocles.

I shall begin with the derivation of the word tragedy. Tragedy is a word compounded of two Greek words τράγος and ᾠδή, a goat and a song, and it was sung at a feast which was kept in honour of Bacchus, he being the first planter of vines in Attica. At this feast a goat was sacrificed, and the reward given to that person who sang best was a goat. Whence Horace,

Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum.
Who sung a tragic song for a vile goat.

Then to these songs there were other additions made, which improved them to dialogues, between two or more: hence proceeded dramatic poetry, both comic and tragic; so that there were some tragedians of smaller account before Thespis; and Mr. Boileau was mistaken in ascribing the first invention of this art to that tragedian. What improvements he and Æschylus afterwards made, Horace tells us in these following lines:

Ignotum tragicæ genus invenisse camœnæ
Dicitur, et plaustris vexisse poëmata Thespis,
Quæ canerent agerentque peruncti fœcibus ora.
Post hunc personæ pallæque repertor honestæ
Æschylus, et modicis instravit pulpita tignis,
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.

Thespis is said to be the first found out
The tragedy, and carried it about,
Till then unknown, in carts, wherein did ride
Those that did sing, and act: their faces dy'd
With lees of wine. Next Æschylus more late
Brought in the visor and the robe of state,
Built a small timber'd stage, and taught them talk
Lofty and great; and in the buskin walk.

Ben Jonson's Hor.

So that at first there was only a Chorus, who acted alone; afterwards, Thespis, in order to give some rest to the Chorus, added another person; and Æschylus a second; one of which was to be the chief character, and the other a dependant or retinue to him: and, in order to give the more room to the dialogue between the two actors, retrenched the length of the songs of the Chorus. Lastly, Sophocles, having more narrowly examined the nature of tragedy, and finding that Æschylus's two actors did not set off the scene well, and could not give an opportunity of such a variety of plots and contrivances as ought to be there, reduced the songs of the Chorus to their just bounds, which Æschylus had shortened too much, and added a third, and there all the Greek tragedians remained. And though Æschylus, both in his Choëphori and Eumenides, has three actors talking together, yet it was because he had made those plays twelve years after he had seen some of Sophocles's pieces, from which he took his third actor: and, therefore, Horace lays down this rule:—

Nec quarta loqui persona laboret.
Nor strive to make a fourth person speak.

And, indeed, if we rightly consider the nature of

dialogue, we shall find that there can happen few cases wherein it shall be necessary for above three persons together to speak, although four persons and more, to give beauty and majesty to a scene, may be admitted.

Thus I have given my readers a short account of the rise and progress of tragedy, until the time of Sophocles, when it was brought to that perfection, that Aristotle would not resolve this question, whether any thing more could be added to it? After Sophocles's time, as princes smiled upon or slighted this and other arts and sciences, so this art underwent many changes, from better to worse, and the contrary. Under the reigns of Alexander, the son of Amyntas, Perdiccas, and Archelaus, it flourished and was in great reputation; but in the following reigns it languished. Then again, under the reigns of Philip and Alexander, those glorious princes so dispensed their favours to the poets, that they again brought it to its flourishing state. After the death of Alexander it began again to fade, and never recovered its strength till the reign of Augustus, a prince, who, how much he was renowned for his great encouragement of this as well as all other kinds of poetry, it is very well known, and the poets rewarded him for

his favours by immortal monuments of his worth; but Horace, in particular, who sang his praise in the most beautiful odes that the most excellent spirit of poetry could possibly dictate. After the death of Augustus, for more than sixteen hundred years, it grew feeble till the last age, when it was recovered out of its almost lost state by M. Corneille and Racine, both Frenchmen.

But to come to the writers of our own nation, the divine Shakspeare was the first who began this art among us, and indeed who ended it too, for he has gained so much praise in it that he hath scarce left any for those who come after him. And he is so much the more to be admired, because he performed what he did without the help of learning; nor, indeed, did he need it; he could look within himself, and there find all the images of nature perfectly painted. And Ben Jonson and Fletcher, who were his contemporaries, though their plots were generally more regular, yet the age in which they lived never esteemed them equal with him. As for Mr. Dryden, dramatic poetry was not his talent, though in one of his pieces, viz. The World Well Lost, he so well joins the regularity of Ben Jonson with the wit of Shakspeare, that I know not whether

it be not the best of all his writings of that kind. Nor must we forget the ingenious Mr. Addison, whose Cato, if we consider the charms of its phrase, the soundness of its moral instructions, the exactness of its characters, if it doth not exceed, yet certainly it is equal to any thing that antiquity can produce. Where we may observe, by the way, how good and necessary the favour and encouragement of princes is for the improvement and perfection of arts; and how all princes who ever encouraged them, thought not this art, in particular, unworthy of their distinguishing smiles. And if it is possible for it to arise yet to a higher perfection, nothing of that nature is not to be hoped for under the auspicious smiles of so gracious a prince as now sways the sceptre of these realms; who, among the many excellent virtues by which he has distinguished himself from his royal ancestors, this is none of the least, namely, his generous love of learning, discovered by his bounteous encouragement of the learned, and the many books which his majesty is pleased to patronize, whose praise, being unequal to so noble a theme, I shall leave to more skilful pens,—

Nec conemur, tenues, grandia.

Having now given the reader a short history of tragedy from its first infancy to our present times, I now return to the tragedy of the ancients, where I shall mark out the chief excellencies for which they are all most eminent, and the faults for which they are most defective; and, upon the comparison, shew that of the three Greek tragedians, the preference is due to Sophocles.

I shall begin with the definition of perfect tragedy, and then repeat some of the laws of most import of tragic poetry, according to which I shall examine them.

Tragedy then is the imitation of an action, that is grave, entire, and hath a just length, of which the style is agreeably relishing, but differently in all its parts, and which, without the assistance of narration, by means of compassion and terror, perfectly refines in us all sorts of passion, and whatever else is like them.

The imitation of an action is the fable, the manners are what distinguish the quality of the action, and the sentiments are the discourses by which they

make known every action, and discover their thoughts. Tragedy, therefore, consists of four essential parts, viz. fable, manners, diction, and sentiments. As for decoration and music they are only added to make the tragedy more agreeable and diverting, and are not at all essential to it. They are not properly the business of the poet, but belong to other persons employed in the business of the theatre, though Æschylus placed much stress in decoration, for he chose every thing that was frightful.

Horror and death were in his paintings seen.

First, as to the fable, the composition of causes and incidents which concur to the making up an action is the fable, in which is to be observed unity of these three things, viz. time, place, and action: for, as tragedy is the imitation of one action, so the fable or imitation ought not to exceed the thing imitated. The same may be said of the unity of time and place. These last Sophocles observes admirably well, the longest of all the actions he imitates takes not up above four hours. That in the Trachiniæ seems to be the longest in any of his pieces, for the time which Hyllus is supposed to

take in going from Trachinium to mount Oeta, which was near it, seems to be something considerable, and a little more than could well be done in the time of representation; yet this is what may very well be allowed of, so little time may well be cast into the intervals of action and not be discerned by spectators, who will not pry so narrowly as to discern any absurdity in it. This is far short of that liberty which some of the moderns have taken in this kind, for they will represent your actions which cannot possibly be done in less than three or four days. How absurd is it to suppose an army to march during the time of action to a certain place of forty or fifty miles distance, where they revolt from their leaders, and the latter are brought in prisoners to the place of action? And yet this is an oversight which a great poet of this age has been guilty of. Every imitation is more perfect as it is more like the thing imitated. Tragedy is the imitation or representation of an action, therefore it necessarily follows that the nearer the time of action comes to the representation of that action, the more perfect the tragedy will be. So far were the ancients persuaded of the necessity of observing this rule, that Euripides in his Suppliants, and Æschylus in

his Agamemnon, had rather incur some absurdity than transgress it.

Unity of place our author, likewise, observes every where, a rule which Shakspeare every where and other moderns often transgress. But, as to that of action, particularly in his Tragedy of Ajax, he is not so exact; great part of which play consists of a dispute between Teucrus and the Grecian chiefs, whether the body of Ajax shall be buried or not, which is a transgression of this rule.

As to the manners, a good poet ought to take care they be such as render the action credible and probable, and such as will let us see what they have actually determined to do in any important and difficult case, before they do it. It is true, no action can be without manners, but they are such, for the most part, as necessarily or probably determine the persons to such particular actions; for instance, when Agamemnon sent ambassadors to Achilles, in Homer, we can judge what will be the consequence of this embassy, by what the poet hath told us of that hero. It is the same with Sophocles, all which the poet says of the character of Oedipus

prepares us for his extravagant passions, and teaches us to judge what excess his blind obstinacy will make him commit.

On the other hand, Aristotle hath shewn us where Euripides hath offended in the goodness and equality of manners: for instance, the manners of Menelaus in his Orestes are bad; Menelaus arrived at Argos just as they were going to condemn Orestes to death, and Orestes hopes that the arrival of his uncle would secure him from danger. The manners which Euripides then gives him would make us think, that he would not forsake his nephew; for he says that his calamity and distress obliged him to take the more care of him; and when Tyndarus pressed to have the prince executed, that he might revenge the death of his daughter, Clytemnestra, he tells him that his long stay among the barbarians had made him one too. Menelaus answers, that he acted in that according to the Grecian education, who always had great considerations for their relations, and thought themselves obliged to do them all possible service: nay, he was so transported as to tell Tyndarus, that anger and old age had made him a fool. Thus are the manners of Menelaus

well denoted, all that he says is a moral speech; and seems to intimate that he will take a resolution agreeable to them: but this is contradicted the next moment, for Menelaus, being terrified at Tyndarus's threats, becomes at once very fearful; and, coward-like, abandons his nephew. The manners of Iphigenia, at Aulis, are likewise very bad; for, (saith Aristotle,) the suppliant Iphigenia, whom we see at the beginning, is not that courageous Iphigenia whom we see at the end. At first she prays in a most slavish manner to her father not to deliver her up to death, and makes a thousand pitiful complaints; and presently after, who is more courageous? Who more in love with glory? Yea, she begs of her mother that she would let her die for the safety of the Greeks.

How far are these from the manners Sophocles gives Antigone? For she dies with the same resolution and magnanimity with which she at first transgressed that impious decree of Creon, and she appears throughout the whole piece the same Antigone. His sentiments which denote those manners are here, and every where else in his pieces, agreeable to truth or similitude. As to diction, it is of

so small importance, that a tragedy is really perfect and entire without it; and, however flat it be, yet it doth not make the other less perfect. In that our author imitates Homer, from whom he borrows many expressions as well as sentiments; but this I shall have occasion to speak of hereafter.

His fables are most of them of the implex kind, *i. e.* such as are unravelled, either by a change of fortune alone, as the Antigone; or remembrance alone, as the Electra; or, lastly, both by a remembrance and change of fortune, as the Oedipus Tyrannus and Trachiniæ; but the Ajax, Oedipus Coloneus, and Philoctetes, are of the simple kind, *i. e.* such whose unravelling is only a single passage of agitation and trouble; and the most perfect tragedy of either kind is that which hath only a single catastrophe, *i. e.* which exposeth the sufferings of one single person, who, being neither good nor bad in the superlative degree, doth not draw on him his sufferings by his crimes, as in the Oedipus.

Euripides, in most of his pieces, has observed this rule, for which reason he was called the most tragical of all the poets, though otherwise he was not so correct as Sophocles.

His manners (as has been shewn before) are very unequal; the songs of his Chorus are sometimes foreign to the subject in hand, an error which Sophocles never ran into contrary to that rule of Horace,—

> *Nec quid medios intercinat actus,*
> *Quod non proposito conducat et hæreat apte.*
>
> For nothing we between the acts should see,
> But with the play exactly will agree.

Now, though the most perfect sort of tragedy be that whose catastrophes are single, as in Oedipus, which exposes the unhappiness of one man, who is less wicked than good; and not double, as the Electra, whose catastrophe is fortunate for the good, and unhappy for the bad; yet there have been many pieces which have succeeded tolerably well, as the Philoctetes of Sophocles, the Suppliants of Æschylus, Heraclides, Helena, and Ion, of Euripides. Yet were they far from that perfection which Aristotle requires, nor did the success of them last so long as of those which were composed according to the former rule. Yet every one of the Greek tragedians, in their different ways, have discovered a singular majesty in their art.

This is what Cicero hath observed in his third book *De Oratore*. *Quam inter se Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, dissimiles sint; quanquam omnibus par pene laus in dissimili scribendi genere tribuatur.* How different are Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, from one another; and yet they all deserve almost equal praise, in their different ways of writing.

Æschylus succeeded very well in his simple tragedies, *i. e.* those which expose to view the unhappiness of one particular person, as his Prometheus, and his Seven Captains of Thebes: but was not so good at his implex, as his Agamemnon and Choëphori. On the other hand, Euripides, though he succeeded very well in his implex pieces, yet his chief excellence consisted in his moral, *i. e.* those which expose to view the happiness of some person; which, though they be opposite to the rule abovementioned, which Aristotle hath laid down for the composition of perfect tragedy, yet there he mixeth the passions so admirably well, that they are preferable to those whose catastrophes are unfortunate, notwithstanding these are more tragical than the other.

But Sophocles, in his implex pieces, *i. e.* his Oedipus, Electra, &c. excelled them all; for which, as well as his other excellencies, we may conclude he is the best of all the Greek tragedians. For his excellency in general he is commended both by ancients and moderns. Virgil, comparing the tragedies of Pollio to those of Sophocles, has these words:—

En erit ut liceat totum mihi ferre per orbem,
Sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna cothurno.

Polemon calls him Homerus Tragicus, the tragic Homer, as Diogenes, Laertius witnesseth, Lib. iv. And if we may believe the same author, he was surnamed *apis*, *i. e.* a bee, for the sweetness of his language.

He was perfectly acquainted with the writings of Homer, to whom he is indebted for the unravelling of the Electra, which was borrowed from that of the Odyssey, where Penelope laments for Ulysses, who was present with her, whom she supposed to be absent, and who is soon discovered to her.

His description of the chariot-course, in the same

piece, is a perfect imitation of that which Homer gives of the chariot-course, wherewith Achilles honoured the funeral of Patroclus, in the 23d Iliad. The character of Pyrrhus, in the Philoctetes, is drawn according to the notion the poet had of his father, Achilles, as his character is represented in Homer; for he hath given him some of his manners, viz. that he scorned to stoop to so mean an action as to deceive Philoctetes with a lie, though it were for his advantage; and though at first he condescended to it, his mind could not be at rest till he had made reparation for it. And Homer represents Achilles saying,—

Ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμῶς ἀίδαο πύλῃσιν
Ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθῃ ἐνὶ φρεσὶν, ἄλλο δὲ βάζει. Iliad ι.

His character of Thersites is taken from the second Iliad, where likewise Ulysses is introduced rebuking and beating him for his saucy language to Agamemnon. And it were no difficult matter to instance where he useth Homer's thoughts and expressions; and his so exact imitation of Homer is the reason why he is so inimitable himself. Mr. Boileau, in a particular place, where he is about

giving us the history of tragedy, hath these following lines in his commendation :—

> Then Sophocles, the genius of his age,
> Increased the pomp and beauty of the stage,
> Engaged the Chorus' song in every part,
> And polished rugged verse by rules of art.
> He, in the Greek, did those perfections gain,
> Which the weak Latins never could obtain.

Mr. Dryden, speaking of the tragedy of Oedipus, in particular, says, Sophocles, indeed, is admirable every where; and in his prologue to his Oedipus:—

> When Athens all the Grecian state did guide,
> And Greece gave laws to all the world beside;
> Then Sophocles with Socrates did sit
> Supreme, in wisdom one, and one in wit.

These testimonies are sufficient to shew the reputation Sophocles had before our times, and how he ought always to be esteemed by persons of the most sound judgment, and refined taste for polite learning. And pity it is that of the hundred and twenty tragedies that admirable tragedian wrote, the injury of time has deprived us of all except these seven.

This, therefore, may suffice to have been said concerning Sophocles's tragedies, both because I here only design to give the reader a general account of what I thought proper to be known before the reading of them, and not to lay down all the rules of an art, of which there are so many excellent treatises extant: as, Aristotle, with Mr. Dacier's notes, Mr. Gildon, Gerard Vossius, &c. and because I have, in my notes, pointed out, in their proper places, what I thought most worthy my observation.

In my translation I have endeavoured to avoid as much as possible these two extremes; *i. e.* neither by aiming at too florid a style to deviate too far from the original, nor yet, by keeping too close to the original, (which Horace calls too faithfully translating,) render the phrase too low and bald; that, by that means, it might be helpful to the learners of the Greek language, as well as others. And, to that end, I had, through the whole course of this work, those words of Horace in my mind:—

Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus.

And a little after,

Ne —— —— ——
Migret in obscuras humili sermone tabernas;
Aut dum vitat humum, nubes et inania captet.

And those of the learned and reverend Doctor Pearce, in the preface to his excellent edition of Longinus, only changing the word Latina into Anglicana.

Velim interpretem fidum esse, non sui ostentatorem: sit modo dictio ejus Anglicana, sint verba sensum Græci authoris clarè breviterque exprimentia, non quæro an versio ornatum præ se ferat, i. e. I would have an interpreter be faithful, not a boaster of his art; let but his diction be good English, clearly and shortly expressing the sense of the Greek author; I desire not that his version be full of fine language.

In my notes I have not scrupled to make bold with some of Mr. Dacier's remarks upon Aristotle; Doctor Potter's Archæologia Græca, and other authors, when I found them conducive to my purpose. Yet most of the notes are my own, and if I have made upon any passage some remarks which have been made before, I either inform the reader of

it, if I know it; and, if not, it is purely accidental that I happen to have the same thoughts with others concerning the same thing.

As to this performance, if the reader finds in it any faults,—

——Quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura,

I hope, in his own humanity, he will not aggravate or insist upon them to my condemnation. I have made it my endeavour every where to give the true sense of my author, and, if therein I have failed, it is no more than what others have done before me in works of this nature, who are much my superiors; and that too, without the fault of them, but of the editors, and false glosses of commentators.

THE

TRAGEDY OF AJAX.

Dramatis Personae.

MINERVA.
ULYSSES.
AJAX.
TEUCRUS.
MENELAUS, AGAMEMNON, } the two Atridæ.
TECMESSA, Ajax's Captive, whom he married.
EURYSACES, Ajax's son by Tecmessa.
A Messenger from Teucrus.
Two Semi-choruses.
Chorus of Salaminian Sailors.

SCENE—The Grecian Camp before Troy, near the Tent of Ajax.

AJAX.

THE ARGUMENT. — *After the death of Achilles, Ajax and Ulysses contending for his armour, the matter was referred to the other Grecian chiefs, who adjudged it to the latter, as the worthier of the two. Whereupon Ajax, fired with rage at this indignity, resolved to satisfy his revenge by killing those, as he thought, corrupt judges. But being, by the Goddess Minerva, struck with madness for his contempt of her assistance, he turns all his rage against the flocks and herds which the Grecians had taken from the Trojans, and their keepers, killing and wounding them in a most ridiculously barbarous manner; thinking all the time that he used the Atridæ so. But when he came to himself, and considered the action as it really was, ridiculous and mean, and unworthy the glory of his own and father's name, the grief and shame thereof drove him to despair, and that to murder himself.*

This subject hath employed the pens of several tragedians before Sophocles; as Æschylus, who wrote a tragedy upon it, whose title was the Judgment of Arms; and among the Romans, Pacuvius and Accius, and this of Sophocles is only a sequel of the same subject.

For the nature of this tragedy it is simple, in opposition to implexa, that is, it continues from the beginning to the end without any change of fortune; for, as Ajax at the beginning of it is in grief for what he had done, so it ends with his death and burial.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Grecian Camp near the Tent of* AJAX, *where* ULYSSES *stands prying about it, and the Voice of* MINERVA *is heard in the Air.*

Min. [a] O, son of [b] Laertes, I have always found

[a] *O son, &c.*] The occasion of Minerva's appearance here is very important, and worthy the presence of a deity; namely, to inform Ulysses of what had been done by Ajax the night before in his madness; which it was impossible should be known without divine assistance: for which reason it is every way agreeable to Horace's rule.

> *Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus*
> *Inciderit.*

Yet if the goddess could have contrived some other way to discover this action to Ulysses, which she might certainly have done, I am afraid Aristotle's rule will be against him, *Art. Poet. cap.* 16. "The unravelling of the subject (saith he) ought to be "taken from the subject itself, without making use of any "machine; or, if it be made use of, it ought to be out of the "action of the tragedy; either to explain some things which "happened before, and which it is impossible for man to know, "or, to inform of something which will happen, concerning which "it is necessary to be instructed." For it was possible that Ulysses by the terror of some frightful dream sent by the goddess might rise up and surprise Ajax in the very fact; as Queen Atossa by such a terror met the lords of Susa after Xerxes's defeat, or Ulysses according to his usual manners being watchful against dangers might have seen him by accident, yet such as the goddess might be supposed to have contrived; if either of these, or any other way might have been contrived, without her personal appearance, then Sophocles, according to Aristotle, hath failed. Yet (as Mr. Dacier observes) Aristotle was too severe; for, says he, if the presence of a deity be absolutely necessary for the unravelling a plot, I see no reason why it should not be used although it be in the action: and we shall find but very few pieces among the ancients managed according to this rule, not even the Iphigenia Taurica, Helena, Ion, and Electra of Euripides. For which reason Horace moderated this rule, and was content to say, *Nec Deus intersit, &c.*

[b] *O son of Laertes.*] Ulysses was the supposed son of Laertes,

thee, with [c] watchful eyes, prevent those plots thy enemies have formed, and turn them on their impious authors heads; and now I see thee among the naval tents of Ajax, where he keeps the outmost guards, searching and tracing his newly-impressed steps, to see whether he be within or not; thy search of him is certain as a Spartan hound's scent of the game. The man is now within, the sweat drops from his head, and murdering hands. Thou hast no business to look in at the gate, but to tell on what account thou searchest thus diligently, that thou mayest hear of me who know all the truth.

Ulys. O voice of Minerva, well known to me though thou art not seen, most kind to me of all the goddesses, I both hear thy voice, and well discern it; for as the sound of a brazen mouth [d] Tyrrhene trumpet surpasseth all others, so doth thy voice most delightful salute my ears. And now you know I walk here on account of [e] valiant Ajax, for him

King of Ithaca, a country in Greece, and very much famed for his wisdom and other virtues, according to Horace, Ep. 2. Lib. 1.

Rursus, quid virtus et quid sapientia possit,
Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulyssem.

He was the best of all the Grecian commanders except Achilles; but, according to Ulysses himself, Ajax was likewise his superior, though that might be said by him out of modesty, for it is plain the other Grecian chiefs thought not so.

[c] *With watchful eyes.*] *Gr.* Θηρώμαχον, as hunting, a metaphor taken from the practice of sportsmen, to find out their game by tract and scent of dogs. This figurative expression denotes the diligence of Ulysses in finding out the authors of the slaughter.

[d] *Tyrrhene trumpet.*] It was so called because it was invented by the Tyrrhenians, from whom it was communicated to the Grecians by one Arichondas, who came to assist the posterity of Hercules: others attribute the invention of it to Tyrrhenus, son of Hercules. Its orifice was cleft, and it sent out an exceeding loud and shrill sound. Therefore Ulysses here compares it to the goddess Minerva's voice.

[e] *Valiant Ajax.*] The Greek is Αιαντι τῷ σακεσφόρῳ, this epithet was peculiar to Ajax, according to Homer, who hath Αιας φέρων σάκος, Ajax who beareth a shield.

and none else I sought out long: and this night he hath done a secret act, but how it was done we are not certain, but still wander in doubtfulness; and willingly I undertook this work, for we now find all our prey destroyed and killed by hands with the keepers of the flock: [f] every one lays the fault on him, and a certain spy hath declared that he saw him skipping over the fields, with his sword dropping with blood which he had newly shed. Immediately I followed those steps, and some reasons induce me to charge the fault on him, but others make me doubt, so that I cannot certainly understand whose deeds these were, but thou art come in season to my aid, for, in every enterprise I take in hand, I am directed by thy governance.

Min. I know it, Ulysses; and therefore went out in thy way, to be assisting to thee in thy search.

Ulys. And, dear goddess, do I undertake this labour to good purpose?

Min. Yes; since the actions of this man concern thee.

Ulys. And why hath he put his hand to so unaccountable an action?

Min. Being incensed with anger for the arms of Achilles.

Ulys. But why doth he offer violence to flocks?

Min. Thinking that in your blood he imbrues his murdering hand.

Ulys. And is that his design; doth he think he commits this slaughter on the Grecians?

Min. And he had perfected it, but for my care.

Ulys. But with what impudence fraught and boldness of mind dare he commit that action?

[f] *Every one lays the fault.*] Here is an instance of the extraordinary justice of Ulysses, that he was unwilling to believe what was charged against Ajax, without the clearest evidence: for he was so amazed at so unexpected a report, that he could not believe it without the positive information of the goddess.

Min. A treacherous night-wanderer, alone he rushed upon you.

Ulys. Was he near us?

Min. At the door of the general's tent.

Ulys. How did he restrain his raging hand from murder?

Min. It was I who quelled his transports of joy, and cast before his eyes a mist that he could not discern right from wrong, and so I turned all his rage against the flocks and cattle, a promiscuous prey, which the herdsmen kept together, where, falling on, he made a slaughter among the horned cattle, killing all round, and thought that with his own hand he killed the two Atridæ; and that he rushed now upon one of the commanders, now upon another: but I coming, pushed on the furious man, with a mad disease, into inextricable ills; and after when he ceased from slaughter, binding again some living oxen with chains, he brings them into his tent, as if they were so many men, and not a prey of horned cattle, and now within the tent he scourgeth them. But I will shew thee evident signs of his disease, that when you see it you may carry the news to all the Grecians. Now be of courage, nor receive him as a dangerous man, or think his sight unfortunate; for I will turn away his eyes from the sight of thee. You; I call you to come out, who bind captive-hands in chains; I call Ajax, come hither from thy tent.

Ulys. What dost thou do, Minerva? By no means call him out.

Min. Wilt thou not be silent? Wilt thou not banish fear?

Ulys. By the gods, let it suffice he stay within.

Min. Why must not he come? Was he not a man before, when he designed your death!

Ulys. Still now he is an enemy to me.

Min. [g] Is it not most delightful sport to laugh at ones enemies?

Ulys. It will satisfy me that he should stay within his tent.

Min. It is plain thou fearest to see a madman.

Ulys. I would not refuse to see him in his senses.

Min. But he shall not see thee when he is present.

Ulys. How? if he sees with the same eyes.

Min. I will cast a mist before his eyes.

Ulys. Let all be done by the contrivance of the goddess.

Min. Stand silently as thou art.

Ulys. Though I stay, yet had I rather be absent.

Min. Ho! you, I call thee, Ajax; why so little dost thou revere thy helper?

ACT I. SCENE II.

Minerva, Ajax, Ulysses.

Aj. Hail, Minerva, hail, Daughter of Jove! well art thou present, and I will crown thee with golden spoils for thy assistance in this hunting.

Min. Thou hast well said, but tell me this; hast thou well stained thy sword in Grecian blood?

Aj. There is reason for boasting, I do not deny it.

Min. Hast thou used thy power against the Atridæ?

Aj. Ay, so that they shall never dishonour Ajax more.

Min. They are dead, as I understand thy words.

Aj. Now dead, let them take away my armour.

[g] *Is it not a most delightful sport.*] Minerva here as a goddess takes that liberty of talking, which would have been unbecoming another, to shew the placable temper of Ulysses, which was not to delight in the misfortunes of his enemies.

Min. Be it so. What of the son of Laertes; in what state is he? Hath he escaped?

Aj. That crafty fox; dost thou ask me where he is?

Min. I mean Ulysses, thy adversary.

Aj. Adored goddess, he is bound within; I will not have him die yet.

Min. What more wouldst thou do? Or what more gain?

Aj. First bound to the pillar of the tent.

Min. What harm wouldst thou do the miserable man?

Aj. After I have made his back bleed with a scourge, then he shall die.

Min. Do not so afflict the wretch.

Aj. In other things, Minerva, I suffer thee to triumph; but he shall suffer this, and no other punishment.

Min. Thou, therefore, since it is thy pleasure to do this, use thy power, spare to do nothing of what thou conceivest.

Aj. I go to the work, in this I obey thee. And mayest thou be ever such an assister to me.

ACT I. SCENE III.

Minerva, Ulysses.

Min. [h]Thou seest, Ulysses, the power of the gods, how great it is: who was more prudent than

[h] *Thou seest, Ulysses.*] She instructs him, by the example of Ajax, never to oppose the gods, which he had done in three instances; first, in throwing Minerva from her chariot; second, in erasing out of his armour the owl which was engraven on it; third, in not obeying his father, who advised him not to disobey the gods, for none (she told him) that ever do, thrive, as appears by the examples of Thamyris and Niobe.

Ulysses in his answer to the goddess, acknowledges the sound-

this man? Who more equal formed to do the noblest exploits.

Ulys. I know none; but I lament him much, being quite wretched, though an enemy, for he is entangled in an inextricable misfortune. I look on nought that has befallen him more than what may befal myself: for, I see that all mortals are nought else but images or a vain shadow.

Min. Therefore, seeing this, speak no proud word against the gods, nor shew thy haughtiness in contemptuous speeches, if you exceed others in bodily strength, or abound more with wealth, since one day is enough to ruin and raise up all human things; but the gods love the prudent and hate the wicked.

ACT I. SCENE IV.

Chorus.

Cho. [1] O, son of Telamon, who rulest the mara-

ness of her doctrine, and how little reason mortals have to lift up themselves against the gods, since the greatest upon earth derive their pedigree from no better principle than the vilest earth-worms. ὁρῶ γὰρ ἡμᾶς εἴδωλα καὶ κἐφην σκίαν. Euripides hath a sentence like it. Ἄνθρωπός ἐστι πνεῦμα, καὶ σκία μόνον. Hor. *Pulvis et umbra sumus.* Anac. Θλίγη κόνις. And even the Apostle St. James, ch. iv. v. 14. Ἀτμὶς πρὸς ὀλίγον φαινομένη, καὶ ἔπειτα ἀφανιζομένη. A vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. By this we see that the first design of the theatre was not merely to amuse men unprofitably, but likewise to instruct them by rational and wholesome precepts.

[1] *O son of Telamon.*] Horace, in his Art of Poetry, recites the several offices of the Chorus in these words:

> *Ille bonis faveatque, et concilietur amicis,*
> *Et regat iratos, et amet peccare timentes:*
> *Ille dapes laudet mensæ brevis; ille salubrem*
> *Justitiam, &c.*

And Sophocles, in every one of his tragedies, strictly observes

time island of Salamis, I rejoice at thy prosperity; but, when a blow from Jove, or any hostile speech of the Grecians spitefully uttered sullies thy honour, I am seized with as great concern and fear, [k] as the timorous dove at the approach of danger. So the last night great terror seized me, caused by an ill report that thou, [l] raging with madness, entering the pasture, didst destroy the cattle of the Grecians, the spoils taken in war, and slew them with sword in hand. Ulysses, framing these backbiting tales, conveys them to the ears of all, and well succeeds, and speaks things that appear credible of thee; and every one who hears him rejoices much, insulting your griefs. The [m] darts of envy soonest hit great souls: if any said such things against me, he would not gain belief; but riches always expose men to envy. The small, without the assistance of the great, are a weak defence to themselves; for, if the great are supported by those of low degree, much more are the poor supported by the great. But it is not possible that even the most inconsiderate men should believe the truth of this report, for the babbling of such men: we can be of no assistance to thee in this matter, but, when they see thy countenance, they tremble as the flocks of birds who fly for fear of the great vulture.

these rules in the songs, and other parts of the Chorus, of which this is one proof; for the Chorus here, which consisted of Salaminian countrymen, and subjects of Ajax, are unwilling to believe the foul report, but rather impute it to the envy of the Grecians; and, through the whole piece, conceive joy or grief from the good or ill fortune of their king.

[k] *As the timorous dove.*] The scholiast notes here, that doves are a very timorous animal, and that when any noise affrights them they shut their eyes.

[l] *Raging with madness.*] *Gr.* ἱππομανῆ, mad as a horse. The scholiast notes here, that the madness of horses is the most fierce of any kind of creature.

[m] *Darts of envy soonest hit great souls.*] As archers with most ease hit the greatest mark, so the tongue of calumny soonest

Strophe I.

[n] Surely Diana, daughter of Jove, who is worshipped in Scythia, (O, great fame, thou mother of our disgrace,) thrust thee on upon the public herds of cattle, probably for having not received the tribute due to her of thanks and praise for the victory in which she assisted thee; or defrauded of her part of noble spoils taken in hunting; or Mars, whose breast is always armed with brass, and his attending god, Enyalius, by nightly contrivances, revenged the affront.

Antistrophe I.

For never in thy right senses, O son of Telamon, thou wouldst have done such imprudent actions, so fallen upon flocks. Some distemper which the gods inflict might cause it; but may Jove and Apollo avert the sad report; or if the great commanders of the army deceived believe these reports, or come

wounds the greatest. This kind of comparison of fame to a cannon is made by our own Shakspeare, in Hamlet, Act IV. Scene I.

> Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends,
> And let them know both what we mean to do
> And what's untimely done: perhaps* fame,
> Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
> As level as the cannon to his blank,
> Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name,
> And hit the woundless air.

[n] *Surely, Diana, daughter of Jove, who is worshipped in Scythia.*] This may be understood of Diana, the goddess and patroness of hunters, who is worshipped in Taurus, a place in Scythia: or the moon, which turns people to madness; she being, as is well known, the same with Diana and Proserpine, only differently called in respect of her different functions. This the Chorus speaks out of benevolence to Ajax, that if he did this fact, it could not be out of a well-weighed judgment and sound mind, but moon-struck phrenzy, or some extraordinary cause.

* Which, Mr. Theobald says, hath been erroneously left out in printing.

they from the vile [o]son of Sisyphus, no longer, O king! hiding thy head—in the naval tents, endure it.

Epode.

But rise from that place where you are long fixed in ease, apt to breed more strife, while you provoke divine vengeance; but the injuries of thy enemies succeed against thee [p]without opposition, while with their tongues they utter heavy reproaches; but grief oppresseth me.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Tecmessa, Chorus.

Tec. [q]O ship-companions of Ajax, [r]Athenians by

[o] *Son of Sisyphus.*] The Chorus means Ulysses, who was son of Anticlea, and Sisyphus, king of Corinth. Sisyphus was the most subtle of men, he engraved his name on the hoofs of his cattle, so that none could discern it but himself: Autolycus, who lived by theft, changed the shape of every thing he had stole, and stealing Sisyphus's cattle, he changed them likewise: but, notwithstanding this, Sisyphus, knowing his inscription, challenged his cattle; whereupon Autolycus kindly received him, and prostituted to him his daughter Anticlea, of whom he begat Ulysses, but he, being brought up with Laertes, was called his son.

[p] *Without opposition.*] *Gr.* ἐν ἐυανέμοις βάσσαις. In valleys exposed to the wind; i. e. it runs like wildfire.

[q] *O ship-companions.*] Here the poet introduces Tecmessa, giving an account of what Ajax had done; and likewise the Chorus informs her, that the cattle which he had slain belonged to the Grecians: so, by informing each other of what they were ignorant of before, are confirmed in the belief of the report which Ulysses spread, which he received from Minerva. Tecmessa was the captive bride of Ajax, and therefore may well be supposed to shew the same concern for him as Briseis did for Achilles.

[r] *Athenians by descent, we mourn, being.*] This the poet says, only to attract the benevolence of the audience, who consisted of Athenians when this piece was first acted. For though Salamis was near Athens, yet they were different countries; nor can I see why they have a title to be called Athenians, because Telamon

descent, we mourn, being careful for the welfare of Telamon's son, far from his country; for now the terrible, the great, and brave Ajax, lies overwhelmed in a storm of woe.

Cho. What grief hath the night produced to damp his former joy? Thou daughter of Phrygian Teleutas, since valiant Ajax preserving thee, keeps thee as his captive bride, so that from thy knowledge thou mayest speak.

Tec. How should I speak what is not to be uttered? For you would hear of sorrow equal to death; for the noble Ajax, seized with madness, in the night hath offended: this you may know; behind the tent cattle slain with hands, all stained with blood, the ruins wrought by this man, witness his crime.

Strophe.

Cho. What report dost thou bring of this furious man, intolerable and yet undeniable, before spread by the great army of the Grecians, which much discourse spreads farther? Woe is me! I fear the approaching ill; for this illustrious man will die with his self-smiting hand, after he hath slain the cattle with his bloody sword; and the keepers of the flocks.

Tec. Woe is me! He is come hither bringing captive beasts, whereof he hath slain one within upon the ground; others striking, he hath divided in two, taking two white rams, of one he hath, as a mower, cut off the head and tongue, and hath flung it away; tying another to a pillar, and taking a great horse-whip, he whips him dismally with a double cord,

was of Ægina, near that country, as the scholiast would fain persuade us. If by the words ἡ δὲ Αἴγινα, τῆς Ἀτθικῆς, he means Ægina, Telamon's grandmother, she was daughter of Æsopus, King of Bœotia, which was divided from Attica by the hill Cytheron.

reproaching with vile words, which some evil demon, and no man, hath taught him.

ANTISTROPHE.

Cho. Now is it time that every one of us should veil his head, and privately take flight, or else speedily embark, and launching out our ships, sail with a full career. The two Atridæ thunder such threats against us, [s] I fear being stoned to death, lest we should suffer punishment with him whom inevitable madness hath seized.

Tec. He rageth no more, but ceaseth as the fierce south wind, if the lightnings cease to flash: and now grown wise, new grief possesseth him. For the consideration of evils, caused by ourselves when we have none else on whom we can charge them, is most afflicting.

Cho. But if he hath ceased from his madness, then I think we are happy. For, since the evil is vanished, we have the less reason to be concerned.

Tec. Whether if any should grant the choice, wouldst thou chuse to afflict thy friends, while thou thyself art in pleasure, or to be in the same common calamity with them?

Cho. The two-fold evil is the greatest.

Tec. Therefore Ajax, though in his senses, is miserable.

Cho. What is that thou hast said? I know not what thou sayest.

Tec. When this man was afflicted with his disease, he was pleased with those evils in which he was plunged; but afflicted us who were sensible, with sorrow: but now that he hath ceased, and breathed from his disease, he is quite changed with sudden

[s] *I fear being stoned to death.*] *Gr.* περφόβημαι λιθόλευστον ἄρην, I fear Mars the stoner. The word ἄρης, both here and in many other places in Sophocles, signifies death.

grief, but we are no otherwise than before: these are therefore two evils instead of one.

Cho. I agree with thee, and fear, least a blow should come from some god, and strike us. But how, if he is free from his disease, is he no more satisfied than when he was diseased?

Tec. You must be informed how the case was.

Cho. How did the mischief begin? declare it to us, since we are partakers in the grief.

Tec. You shall know the whole matter, as being partaker in the sorrow. Towards the end of the night, when the [t]evening lamps no longer shined, taking his two-edged sword, he sought vain pretences to go out. I blamed him, and said what dost thou, Ajax? Why, unbidden, nor called by any of the messengers, dost thou attempt thus to go out, nor alarmed by the trumpet's voice, but now when the whole army sleeps. He spoke to me what was short, but usually said silence is an ornament to women. Then, hearing this, I ceased, but he rushed out alone, nor can I say what he did there; but he came in leading bulls tied together, dogs which guarded the flocks, and a prey of horned cattle. Some he decollated, turning others upside down, he slew and dissected, others he beat as captives, thus raging against the herd; then rushing forth to the door, he held discourse [u]with some shadow; now against the Atridæ, now speaking of Ulysses, uttering many ridiculous speeches, mentioning how great an injury he repaid them: then,

[t] *Lamps no longer shined.*] *i.e.* When the evening stars shone no longer; or, rather, when the lamps that were set up in the evening, to give light in the camp, went out.

[u] *With some shadow.*] Here, Tecmessa, not knowing that the goddess Minerva talked with Ajax, imputes his hastening out of his tent when he was called by her, and his discoursing with her, to his madness; for mad folks usually either talk to themselves or with their own shadow.

rushing in again to the tent; in a while he returned to himself, and when he saw the tent full of ruins he had made, striking his breast, he roared out, and sate down among the slaughtered sheep, and holding his hair fast in his finger nails, he sate a great while speechless; at last he uttered dismal threats against me, unless I shewed how every misfortune happened, and inquired in what he had been employed; and I, friends, out of fear, gave him a perfect relation of all that had passed, as far as I knew. He presently made the whole tent resound with dismal cries, such as I never heard before from him, for he always reckoned such lamentations proper only to weak and faint spirits. Disdaining, therefore, such shrill cries, he used to roar out like a bellowing bull. But now, afflicted with such a sad misfortune, without eating or drinking, among the cattle, slain with the sword, he sits down, and he is certainly prepared to do some desperate deed, he speaks such things, and utters such complaints. [x] But, O, friends, I beseech you (for, for this cause I came out) go in and help him, if you can in ought, for such men are prevailed upon by their friends.

Cho. O, Tecmessa, daughter of Teleutas, thou tellest us terrible news, that Ajax is mad in his misfortunes.

Aj. Woe is me!

Tec. Presently he will cry louder, have you not heard?

Aj. Woe is me!

[x] *But, O friends, I beseech you go in and help him.*] The contrivance of the poet is admirable here, who, in order to bring Ajax to shew his grief upon the stage, introduceth first Tecmessa, begging the assistance of the Chorus to comfort Ajax, as being abler to do it than she, who was but a weak woman and a captive; then, lest the Chorus should go out for that purpose, supposeth Ajax to bawl out from within.

Cho. The man seems to be still afflicted with his disease, or grieved with the remembrance of his former madness.

Aj. O son, son!

Tec. Woe is me a wretch! Eurysaces, he bawls out for thee. What doth he desire with all this earnestness?

Aj. [y] I call Teucrus, where is Teucrus? Will he ever be chasing his prey, while I perish?

Cho. The man seems to be sensible, open the door, perhaps he will have some discretion when he sees me.

Tec. [z] Behold, I open, you may see his actions, and in what case he is.

ACT II. SCENE II.

Ajax, Tecmessa, Chorus.

Ajax. Woe is me, friends and ship-companions, and only of all my friends who persevere in the strict law of friendship. [a] You see how waves, as

[y] *I call Teucrus.*] Ajax, having determined with himself not to survive the disgrace of killing the cattle, calls for Teucrus to commit to him the care of his child after his decease. This, supposing the absence of Teucrus was very suitable to the purpose of the poet; for, had he been at home, he would have been a curb to Ajax's rage of grief. There is much the same conduct observed in the Electra, where Ægisthus is supposed to be in the fields, which gives a better opportunity to Electra to utter her complaints before the spectators, and so to move their compassion, which is one great end of tragedy.

[z] *Behold, I open, you may see.*] Here is represented to the view of the spectators, Ajax, all bloody, lying, with his bloody sword, among the slaughtered cattle; a circumstance very moving.

[a] *You see how waves.*] Ajax here, in order to shew the greatness of his calamity, makes use of a figurative representation of it, drawn from things most familiar to sailors, viz. the violent agitation of the waves after a storm.

a ship beaten by a terrible storm, exercise all their fury against me.

Cho. Woe is me! How true what thou hast attested now appears, the thing is plain, that he is beside himself.

Aj. Woe is me! Ye race of men, assistants in the naval art, who sailed hither rowing the oars in the sea, you alone I have found, of all the chiefs, regarding me; now all of you together rid me of my wretched life.

Cho. Speak good words I pray, [b]lest, applying a bad remedy to a bad disease, you bring upon yourself a worse evil than the former.

Aj. Thou seest me a brave stout-hearted man, and undaunted in battles of war, now dreadful with my hands among innocent cattle; woe is me, what slaughter have I made? How have I made myself a reproach?

Tec. O, my lord Ajax, I beseech you say not so.

Aj. [c]Wilt thou not go hence? Alas! alas!

Cho. By the gods, submit and be wise.

Aj. O, unfortunate wretch that I am, who let go from my hand those villains, and falling upon innocent oxen and goats, spilt their black blood.

Cho. Why shouldest thou grieve for what is done, for it cannot be undone?

Aj. O, thou who seest all things, and art the instrument of all mischief, the most filthy varlet of the army, now how dost thou laugh at me, what pleasure dost thou take?

[b] *Lest applying.*] *i. e.* Strive not to hasten on your death, which will be an evil worse than your disease of madness.

[c] *Wilt thou not go hence.*] Tecmessa continuing to break in upon the discourse which Ajax holds with the Chorus, he desires her to retire into the tent, not out of contempt, as being his captive, but familiarity, as his wife.

Cho. [d] Every one laughs or mourns by God's permission.

Aj. O, that I might see him though thus afflicted; woe is me!

Cho. Speak nothing great; seest thou not to what evil thou art come?

Aj. O Jupiter, the father of my ancestors, that I could first destroy that flattering enemy, that vagabond, and the other two princes, and at last die myself.

Tec. Since you pray for such things, pray likewise that I may die; why should I live when thou art dead?

Aj. O my light, now darkness, that shone on me, now dark as hell, take, O take me an inhabitant to your gloomy regions, for I cannot look to the race of gods or meek men for assistance; but the powerful daughter of Jove persecutes me to death. Whither can I flee? Where shall I rather remain? For my misfortunes destroy me, and we are undone with that foolish prey; and the whole army on every side with all their power will destroy me.

Tec. Woe is me: so great a man to say such things now, as before he would have disdained to say!

Aj. O brooks that flow into the sea, and caves and forests near the shore, long time you have kept me at Troy, but no longer with breath you shall. O neighbouring streams of Scamander favouring the Argives, you shall no more see me. [e] I speak a

[d] *Every one laughs.*] As all things are by the permission of the gods, who often turn bad actions to good ends, so likewise that Ulysses should sport himself with your misfortunes is by their permission.

[e] *I speak a bold word.*] In the condition Ajax was, it was not unseemly for him to boast of his greatness, but it rather increaseth the passion of the tragedy. Thus in the Trachiniæ, Hercules near his death boasted in these words:—

bold word, such a one as Troy never saw in the army which came from the Grecian land, and now dishonoured I lie here.

Cho. I know not how to hinder thee, or suffer thee to speak, being plunged in so much evil.

Aj. [f] Ah! who could think my name should thus agree with my evils? Now is it time for me thrice to lament, being plunged into so many miseries: [g] whose father from the land of Idæa having done the noblest deeds in war, came home loaded with honours; but I, his son, came to this place, not with less strength endowed, nor famed for less achievements; now dishonoured of the Grecians, here I perish: [h] and so much I think I know, if living Achilles were to decide the controversy of the armour, and to adjudge to either the precedence in valour, none else should have them but me. But now the Atridæ allowed wisdom as proper only to

ὦ χέρες, χέρες,
ὦ νῶτα, καὶ σέρν', ὦ φίλοι βραχίονες,
ὑμεῖς ἐκεῖνοι δὴ καθέσταθ', οἵπερ
νεμέας ἔνοικον βαικόλων ἀλάσορα
λέοντ', ἄπλαλον θρέμμα κἀπροσήγορον, &c.

The apostle St. Paul himself did the same, when he said, 2 Tim. iv. 6. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my "departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight," &c.

[f] *Ah! who could think my name.*] Here is what we call a pun, which Ajax makes upon his own name, whose two first letters are the same with αἰ, a word of sorrow. This I fear is scarce becoming the gravity of this kind of poem.

[g] *Whose father from the land.*] His father Telamon, assisting Hercules in his wars against Troy, was the first who mounted the wall: wherefore Hercules gave him τὰ πρῶτα καλλιστεῖα, the chief reward, which was Hesione daughter of Laomedon. The occasion of this war was, because Laomedon denied to give Hercules the two white horses he was to have had as a reward of his valour in slaying the sea-monster, and delivering Hesione, who was to have been devoured by him.

[h] *And so much I think I know.*] Observe all along, how Ajax's discourse savours of the pride and haughtiness of his spirit.

that crafty Ulysses, [i] slighting my virtues: unless my eyes and mind had diverted me from my resolution, they had never passed a judgment against any other man; but now the terrible, the invincible goddess, daughter of Jove, hath deceived me, when I stretched out my hand against them, inflicting on me a violent disease, so that in the blood of those oxen I stained my hand, but the Atridæ, having escaped against my will, deride me. But when God opposeth, the weak may escape the stronger; and now what must I do, who apparently am hated of the gods? The Grecian army hates me, all Troy hates me, and the neighbouring country. Shall I go home and leave the ports wherein my ships are harboured, and the Atridæ to themselves, and sail home over the Ægean sea? What fame can I shew my father Telamon? How will he endure to see me returned empty and without noble spoils, with which he once went laden home? That is not to be borne. But what if I go to the Trojan guards and attacking them by myself fall in some brave action? But there I should gratify the Atridæ; it never shall be: but some action must be attempted, and such whereby I may shew my old father that I am no degenerate coward. It is the certain sign of a base spirit, to covet a long life which is attended with many troubles. What comfort can there be in a multitude of days which only serve to defer desired death? And I look upon him as the vilest of wretches who encourageth himself with fruitless hopes; but it becomes a generous man bravely to live, or as bravely to die in the pursuit of glory; thou hast heard the sum of what I had to say.

Cho. Nobody can say, my lord, that thou hast

[i] *Slighting my virtues.*] The Greek is ἀνδρὸς τῶδε, of this man, meaning himself, a way of speaking very familiar with Sophocles.

spoke unlike thyself: [k] yet cease from this fury of thy mind, and let the judgment of thy friends prevail, and lay aside those cares.

Tec. O my lord Ajax, no greater evils can afflict mankind than fortune's malice often lays upon us. I am descended of a free father, and the most wealthy of the Phrygians, but now I am a servant, for so the gods and your victorious hand would have it; but, since I was raised to your bed, you are the only object of my love. Therefore I beseech you by [l] domestic Jove, and by [m] our marriage bed, which makes us one, suffer me not to endure a reproach among thy enemies; for, if thou wilt die and leave me, be assured that I in that day shall be dragged away with indignity by the Grecians to live a servile life, together with thy child. And some harsh master will bitterly reproach me, whose spleen shall dictate words like these: "Behold the con-" cubine of Ajax, who was the most powerful " prince in all the army, what servitude doth she " now endure instead of how much honour?" Thus

[k] *Yet cease from this, &c.*] The Chorus here, endeavouring to comfort Ajax, takes the liberty of a friend and talks more boldly than Tecmessa; for she artfully, shewing her condition, endeavours to mollify him, by moving him to pity.

[l] *By domestic Jove.*] Those who cohabited together, saith the Scholiast, invocated domestic Jove, those who were friends friendly Jove, those in the same fortune social Jove, strangers hospitable Jove, those who swore to each other Horkius, those who prayed Hikesius, and brothers Homognius Jove; but doubtless it was the same Jove who was always meant, but differently styled, in respect of his different offices.

[m] *By our marriage bed.*] Here Tecmessa modestly puts Ajax in mind of their conjugal loves: whereas, Euripides hath been guilty of a fault in his Hecuba, in introducing that queen speaking very immodestly:

πῶ τὰς φίλας δῆτ' εὐφρονας δείξεις, ἄναξ, &c.

But Sophocles here imitates Homer, who introduceth Andromache endeavouring to move Hector to compassion, and divert him from his purpose of going to the battle.

will my fate undo me: such foul reproaches are unbecoming thee or thy race. Therefore respect thy aged father whom thou hast left at home; respect thy mother who with many prayers solicits the gods for your safe return home; pity, my lord, thy child, who if deprived of you will be brought up under unfriendly tutors. This will be our sad portion of evils when you die. For me I have nothing to which I can look with hopes of succour besides thee; thou hast destroyed my country by the sword, my mother likewise, and death hath taken my father to the inhabitants below. What country therefore will supply the want of thee? What riches? In thee I am only safe: but remember me, a man ought to remember the benefits he hath received, for kindness always begets kindness: but from whom the memory of good treatment slips, he cannot be esteemed a generous man.

Cho. I would thy stubborn heart were mollified like mine with pity, thou wouldest applaud her speeches.

Aj. And much applause shall she have of me, if she will only do what I command her.

Tec. My lord, thou shalt ever find me obedient to thy will.

Aj. Bring to me then my child, that I may see him.

Tec. But I sent him away for fear.

Aj. Of me, when my distemper seized me; was it not so?

Tec. Ay, lest you should happen to meet the poor infant and slay him.

Aj. That act indeed would not have been unlike me.

Tec. Therefore his safety was my care.

Aj. I commend the deed, and the diligence you used.

Tec. Wherein therefore can I serve thee?

Aj. Permit me to see and speak to him.

Tec. He is attended by the servants hard by.

Aj. What therefore hinders that I may not enjoy his presence?

Tec. My child, thy father calls thee. Bring him hither whosoever of the servants bears him in his arms.

Aj. Doth he answer to thy call, or did he not hear thee?

Tec. One of the servants brings him hither.

[*Eurysaces is brought in by a servant.*

Aj. Bear him hither, he will not fear when he looks on this fresh slaughter, if he be truly my son. He must be instructed in his youth in the fierce manners of his father, and be made like him in his nature. Nay, child, mayest thou be more happy than thy father, in other things like him, and thou wilt be no ill man. And herein I reckon thee happy that thou art sensible of none of these evils; in knowing nothing is the happiest life, for not to know is an ill that never causeth grief. For when thou art arrived to that perfection of understanding, that thou canest tell what it is to rejoice and grieve, thou mayest shew among my enemies of what father thou art descended. In the mean while let thy tender spirits so support thee, that as the vigour of thy mind increases thou mayest increase thy mother's joy. I know none of the Grecians will injure thee with vile reproaches, though absent from me: I will leave thee Teucrus for thy guardian, who will carefully instruct thy youth, though he is now far off, [n] keeping guard against the enemies. But, O

[n] *Keeping guard against the enemies.*] i. e. the Thracians: for, toward the end of the Trojan wars, they assisted the Trojans, wherefore the Grecians set ambuscades at all the avenues and passages out of that country, that they might fall upon them in their way, and cut them off before they joined the Trojans. The poet therefore supposed Teucrus to have been one of those whose post

soldiers, seafaring people, I intreat this favour of you all, to declare this my command to him, that, taking my child to my palace in Salamis, he may shew him to Telamon and to my mother Eribœa, that he may be their continual comfort in old age, until they arrive at the chambers of the infernal gods. Nor shall any expose my armour to the Grecians as the subject of another contest, nor to my plague Ulysses; but thou child take that which hath thy [o] name, Eurysaces, and hold it, turning by the folded rein, the sevenfold impenetrable shield: [p] my other armour shall be buried with me. But speedily receive this child, take him hence, nor fill the tent with thy cries. The woman much laments, shut quick the doors, [q] it is not the part of a wise physician to repeat enchantments to a wound that requires cutting.

Cho. I feared thy resolution, for thy tongue so sharpened pierceth me.

Tec. O, my lord Ajax, what hast thou resolved to do?

Aj. Judge not nor inquire, it is a good thing to be prudent.

Tec. Woe is me, how I despond, and I beseech thee by thy infant and the gods betray us not.

Aj. Thou grievest much, knowest thou not that I am no more a debtor to the gods?

was to watch them; and him, being his brother, Ajax promiseth to leave Tecmessa and Eurysaces, as their defender against those dangers which she was apprehensive they would be in after his death.

[o] *Which hath thy name.*] His name was composed of the two words, εὐρὺς and σάκος, a broad shield.

[p] *My other armour shall be buried with me.*] Thus Homer mentions one who after his death was burnt with his armour:

Αλλ' ἄρα μιν καλέκηε σὺν εἵμασι δαιδαλέοισι.

[q] *It is not the part, &c.*] This is spoke in allusion to an ancient custom of curing by enchantments or music; so the sting of the tarantula is said only to be cured by music.

Tec. Good words, I beseech thee.
Aj. Speak to those who will hear thee.
Tec. And wilt thou not yield to me?
Aj. Thou talkest very much.
Tec. I fear, O king.
Aj. Wilt thou not shut her up? [*To the Chorus.*
Tec. Now by the gods be mild.
Aj. Thou thinkest foolishly, if thou thinkest to instruct my manners.

ACT II. SCENE III.

Chorus.

STROPHE I.

Cho. O Salamis, who art encompassed by the raging sea, thou happy isle, how dost thou enjoy the praise of every tongue? But I, unhappy wretch, it is a long time since I have here remained in mount Ida's verdant pastures, of no account, harassed with the tedious toils of war, having the sad hope that I should at last arrive at the dark abominable grave.

ANTISTROPHE I.

And to me incurable Ajax [r] is second in misfortunes; still, alas! continuing in that madness, sent by divine appointment, whom thou, O Salamis, didest send out before a victor in many battles; but

[r] *Is second in misfortunes.*] The Greek word is ἔφεδρος; which is derived from ἐπὶ and ἕδρα, and primarily signifies no more than one who sits by, or a looker on; but among the Greeks it was used to signify him, who, when two had wrestled before, wrestled with him who had the mastery. So here the Chorus uses it in a metaphorical sense, to signify that Ajax is their second, or is plunged in the same calamities with them.

now beside himself he plungeth his friends into sad griefs; and all his other acts performed with his valiant hand are slighted by the unkind Atridæ.

Strophe II.

How his miserable mother, worn out with many days, and full of grey hairs, when she hears that he is afflicted with madness, unhappy will lament, not with the lamentations of the sorrowful nightingale, but will bewail with piercing cries, with clapping of her hands, striking her aged breast, and tearing her grey hairs.

Antistrophe II.

Better is he who lies hid in the dark grave than he who is diseased without relief. For Ajax, when he left his father's family, was the greatest of all the Grecians, but now no longer continueth in his accustomed manners, but is beside himself. O miserable father! what a sad calamity which is befallen your son will shortly wound your ears, a calamity which no age ever saw befall the descendants of Æacus except this.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Ajax, Chorus.

Aj. [s] Long and infinite duration of time brings all hidden things from their gloomy coverts, and conceals things which now appear: there is nothing that is not to be hoped for; even the most sacred

[s] *Long and infinite duration of time.*] Here Ajax comes in and talks as if by the persuasion of Tecmessa he were reconciled to life, but this must be understood as the effect of a sudden passion, or a pretence the better to carry on his purpose; for soon after he went out and fell upon his sword.

oaths and stubborn minds are broken. I who continued long stubborn, [t] as slacked iron, am grown mild by this woman's discourses: for I am touched with pity on her behalf, lest I should leave her a widow among my enemies, and my child an orphan; [u] but I will go to the streams and pasture near the shores, that I may purify myself from my filthiness, and so escape the grievous anger of the goddess; and going until I find some unfrequented place, I will hide this thy sword, the most hated of all thy armour, in a hole dug in the earth, where none shall see it, but night and the grave will keep it below. But I, since I received in my hands this gift of Hector, the worst of all my enemies, received nothing acceptable from the Grecians; but it is a true proverb among men, [x] the gifts of enemies are not gifts, nor profitable. Wherefore for the future we shall learn to honour the Atridæ: they are our governors, so that we must submit; why not? Things most potent and divine submit to honours: [y] the snowy winter submits to the fruitful

[t] *As slacked iron am grown mild.*] As iron which being dipped in oil grows softer, so am I mollified by the speech of this woman. Or thus, as iron when it is dipped red hot in water hisses and roars, and after grows still, when cold: so am I? Thus in Homer:

εἰν ὕδατι ψυχρῷ
Βάπτηλαι μεγάλαι ἄχονται.

Dipped in cold water, which roars aloud.

[u] *But I will go to the streams.*] See our notes on Oedipus Tyrannus, Act V. Scene I.

[x] *The gifts of enemies are not gifts.*] An oxymoron, or an expression spoke with such an affectation of wit, that it seems rather to savour of folly, yet it is very elegant. We have many such expressions in sacred as well as prophane writings: as, 1 Tim. v. 6. "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she "liveth."

[y] *The snowy winters.*] As all things on earth have their vicissitudes and changes, so, saith Ajax, is it fit that I, who awhile ago raged with madness, should return to my right senses?

harvest; the circle of the sad night to the day, to shew its light borne on white [z] coursers; a gentle blast lays to sleep the roaring sea; and powerful sleep, that binds us as with fetters, sets us free again; nor always holds us. Why therefore should we not know how to be wise? For me I know, that when I was an enemy, I was so far an enemy as to become a friend again; and so far I would help my friend, as one who will not be so always; for the port of friendship is with many men unfaithful; but herein it will be well. Do thou go in, Tecmessa, and pray to the gods happily to accomplish what my heart desires, and you, O companions, herein honour me, and signify to Teucrus when he comes, to take care of us, and be kind to you likewise; but I go where it is fit I go, and, you, do what I say, and soon you shall know that though now I am unhappy, yet am I secure from all evils.

By the same argument Horace consoles his friend Valgius, lib. 2. ode 9.

Non semper imbres Nubibus hispidos
Manant in Agros; aut mare Caspium
Vexant inæquales procellæ
Usque, &c.

[z] *Borne on white coursers.*] *Gr.* τῇ λευκοπώλῳ ἡμέρᾳ this epithet is given to the day, because, saith the Scholiast on this place, the sun which ushereth in the day is said to ride in a chariot drawn by two horses, whereof one is called Lampon, and the other Phaëthon. But he tells us in another place that Phaëthon is the Sun himself, or the son of the Sun: which is confirmed by the testimonies of Ovid, Met. 2. and Homer, Odyss. 11. 320. the latter of which hath the words, Ἥλιος φαέθων. The poets generally assign him four horses. Namely, Pyrois from πῦρ, *ignis*, fire; Eous, from ἠώς, *Aurora*, the morning; Æthon, from αἴθω, *uro*; Phlegon, from φλέγω, *inflammo*.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Chorus.

STROPHE.

Cho.[a] He is overcome with love: I am overjoyed. [b] O Pan, conversant near the seas, come from the precipices of the snowy Cyllenian rocks, leader of dances, as thy divinity hath taught us dances in Nyssa and in Cnossus, now is it time for me to lead up such dances. O Delian, King Apollo, who passest over the Icarian sea, mayest thou ever shew such favour and benevolence to me.

ANTISTROPHE I.

For warlike Ajax hath banished cruel sadness from our eyes. O Jove, now the clear and bright day is at hand wherein we may go to the Grecian ships. For Ajax, forgetting his griefs, hath performed lawful sacrifices to the gods, worshipping them with the greatest submission. Great Time destroys and consumes all things. There is nothing that can be mentioned which we may not hope for;

[a] *He is overcome with love.*] It was necessary here that Ajax should have some time to retire to a convenient place to effect his purpose before the messenger came with orders from Teucrus, that he should be kept in; otherwise Ajax might have been met by the messenger. And that time the poet supposes to be spent in the song of the Chorus for his happy change.

[b] *O Pan, conversant near the seas.*] They invocate Pan here as being the president of Choruses, and the reasons given by the Scholiast why he is called ἁλίπλαγκτε, or sea-wanderer, are, because he assisted the Athenians in a sea-fight; or, because he took Typhon in a net; or, because he is worshipped on the tops of mountains near the sea; or, because fishermen worship him as their God; or, because he loves noise in choruses, hence ἁλίπλαγκτε, as ἁλίβρομε, because the sea makes a noise; or, lastly, because he is the overseer of flocks near the sea. But whether any of these reasons, or which of them, resolves the question, I will leave it to the judgment of the learned.

for beyond all hope Ajax is no more malicious against the Atridæ; but all strife is vanished and gives place to love.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Messenger, Chorus.

Mes. My friends, this first I will declare to you, Teucrus is just arrived from the Mysian hills; and as he comes through the middle of the camp, all the Argives, with one voice, reproach him. For, knowing him as he passed along, they surrounded him, and then from every side reviled him; and there was none who called him not the brother of the madman, and conspirator against the army, so that he scarce avoided being stoned to death; it came even to this, that with their hands their swords were drawn from their sheaths. At last contention ceased by the intercession of the seniors, when it was at its greatest height. But where is Ajax, that I may tell him what I have to say? For it is but just that we discover all the matter to our superiors.

Cho. He is not within, but is just now gone out, having undertaken a new enterprise; his manners too are changed.

Mes. Alas! alas! either he was too slow in sending me on this journey, or I too slowly came.

Cho. What advantage hath been intercepted.

Mes. Teucrus said, that this man should be kept within the tent, nor suffered to go out until he came.

Cho. But he is gone out, and returned to a better mind, to reconcile himself to the angry gods.

Mes. These words are full of folly, if Calchas wisely prophesied.

Cho. What hath he prophesied concerning this affair?

Mes. So much I know, as now I shall speak, for I was witness to it. From the council and the royal circle, where the Atridæ sat, Calchas rose up alone, and kindly putting his hand in Teucrus's, spoke to this purpose: "See that, with all your art, "you endeavour to shut up Ajax for this present "day in his tent, if ever hereafter you would see "him alive; for this day alone the anger of the "goddess Minerva pursues him. And farther add-"ed, proud men and mighty bodies fall by the "grievous punishment of the gods, when, being "born like other men, they think not like them." But he, when he came from home, shewed himself foolish, when his father spoke well, and said: son, overcome in war, but always with God. But he haughtily and foolishly answered, father, even the worthless person may obtain the victory with the assistance of the gods, but I without them hope to attract to myself that glory; such a proud speech he uttered. Then a second time, when divine Minerva exhorting him, said, that he should turn his bloody hand against the enemies: then he replied a terrible and unutterable speech, queen, stand by other Grecians, the fight will never break out near my post. By such speech he gained the implacable anger of the goddess, not thinking as a man; but, if this day he is in being, soon, through God, we may be his preservers. Such things the prophet said. But Teucrus immediately sent me to you, from the palace, to bear to you this command, to guard him; but if we are deprived of him, he is no more, if Calchas be wise.

Cho. O wretched Tecmessa, unfortunate lady! Come out and behold this man, and hear what words he speaks. Alas! it is to be feared that all our joys are fled.

ACT IV. SCENE II.

Messenger, Chorus, Tecmessa with her Child.

Tec. Why do you again raise me, a wretch, who but now rested from mighty woes?

Cho. Behold this man, who comes bringing to us an account of the action of Ajax, which I lament.

Tec. Alas me! What sayest thou man?

Mes. As to you I know not; but as to Ajax, if he be gone out, I distrust.

Tec. He is indeed gone out, which makes me grieve. What sayest thou?

Mes. Teucrus sent word to shut him up in the tent, nor suffer him to go out alone.

Tec. Where is Teucrus, and why doth he say so?

Mes. He is hard by, and thinks the *exit* of Ajax fatal.

Tec. Woe is me, a wretch; from whom learnt he that?

Mes. From a prophet taught of God, that this day brings him life or death.

Tec. O me! my friends, assist in this my necessity. Let some hasten for Teucrus to come with speed; let some go to the western, others to the eastern, tops of the hills, and search the sad *exit* of Ajax; for by him I find I am deceived, and cast out of his former grace. O me, my child! What shall I do? It is no time to sit, but I will go wheresoever I can: we will go, we will hasten; this juncture is not for sitting, while we would save a man who hastens to die.

Cho. [c] I am prepared to go, and I will shew it not

[c] *I am prepared to go.*] While the Chorus and others are gone in quest of Ajax, the scene changes to an open place, where the poet introduces Ajax making a very moving speech before his death, and then falling upon his sword, in the presence of the

in word alone, but swiftness shall follow both of feet and action.

[*Scene changes to a forest, where Ajax is alone, his sword fixed in the earth, with the point upwards.*]

Aj. The murdering sword stands [d] most sharp for slaughter, if I have time to reason thus, the gift of Hector, the most hated to me of all the Phrygians, and most odious to behold. It is fixed in that hostile land of Troy, newly sharpened with an iron-eating whetstone; preparing well I have fixed it, the most acceptable to me, by which with speed I die. And thus we are prepared. First of all, then, O Jupiter, assist me; I shall not desire to receive a great gift; send to me some messenger, to bear the sad report to Teucrus, that he may take me first away, fallen on my bloody sword; lest, first seen by the enemies, I be cast forth to the dogs, and to the birds a prey. This, O Jupiter! I commit to thy care; and I call likewise Mercury, the conductor of infernal spirits, with a gentle and swift course to bear me to the shades below, [e] when I have slain myself with this sword. And I call as my assistants those eternal virgins, ever seeing all the afflictions incident to men,

spectators. This is contrary to what Æschylus before had done in treating upon this subject and to Horace's rule.

———*Non tamen intus*
Digna geri promes in scenam, &c.

Yet Hedeline, in his *Praxi Theatrica*, strenuously defends him for this conduct.

[d] *Most sharp for slaughter.*] *Gr.* τομώτατος.

[e] *When I have slain myself.*] *Gr.* Πλευρὰν διαῤῥήξαντα. Divided my side. It was said that Ajax was by Hercules covered with a lion's skin every where but under his arm-pits. Wherefore, Æschylus, speaking of him, says, that his sword bent and could not pierce his body, until some goddess, being present, shewed him in which side he should pierce himself. Wherefore, Sophocles would not contradict his senior, but says he pierced his side, but mentions not which side.

the venerable furies, quick-footed, to come and revenge the sufferings of the dead ; them I call to know how miserably I perished by the Atridæ, and may they destroy likewise those vile pernicious wretches ; as they see me fall self-murdered, so may they fall murdered by their most beloved children. Go, swift-revenging furies, fall on, nor spare the whole army. And thou, O sun ! who drivest thy chariot through high heaven, when thou seest my father's country, pulling back thy golden rein, relate my misfortunes and my death to my old father, and my miserable mother, who, unhappy, when she hears this report, will fill the city with her cries. But it is to no purpose vainly to mourn these evils, but this business must be enterprized. O death, death ! come and behold me, with thee alone I will talk ; and thou, O light of this bright day ; and thou, O sun, thou charioteer ! I call thee last and no more ; O sacred soil of my own country of Salamis ! O seat in my palace, celebrated Athens, and youths brought up with me, fountains and rivers, and the Trojan land, I call ; farewell, my parents, this is the last word Ajax saith to you ! the rest I will speak among the shades below.

ACT IV. SCENE III.

First Semichorus.

Sem. Toil still increaseth toil ! whither, O whither, have I not gone ? No place can tell. Alas ! but, lo, I hear some noise ; 'tis from the fellow-sailors of our ships.

ACT IV. SCENE IV.

First Semichorus. Second Semichorus.

2*d Sem.* What news now ?

1*st Sem.* I have traced the whole western side of the fleet.

2*d Sem.* Hast thou, indeed?

1*st Sem.* Abundance of labour, nought else appears.

2*d Sem.* Nor towards the sun's rising, directing his way, doth he any where appear to me.

1*st Sem.* Who is there, of the laborious fishermen, sleepless, intent upon their prey, or who of the gods inhabiting Olympus, or the rivers which flow into the Bosphorean sea, knows, and, if he hath seen, can tell of cruel-hearted Ajax, where he wanders? It is a miserable thing for me, in a succession of long labours, neither by running to approach him, nor, though weak with search, find where he is.

ACT IV. SCENE V.

Tecmessa, Chorus.

Tec. Woe is me! whose voice is that, which, sounding from the forest, is heard as near us? ah, me, a wretch!

Cho. I see the miserable captive bride, Tecmessa, overwhelmed with grief.

Tec. It is past; I am undone, I am destroyed! O, friends!

Cho. What is the matter?

Tec. Ajax now is newly slain, the sword is sheathed within his body.

Cho. Woe to my coming! Woe is me, O king! Thou hast slain me thy fellow sailor. O me a wretch, and thou unhappy woman!

Tec. Since it is so, it is time to lament.

Cho. With whose hand did the wretch do it?

Tec. By himself he fell, it is plain; for in the earth the sword fixed argues it.

Cho. Woe is me, my miseries! Thou, how great a man, art slain, unguarded by thy friends; I, foolish, in every thing deceived, in all things ignorant, neglected: where, where lies stubborn unhappy Ajax?

Tec. He is not to be seen, but I will cover him all over with a folded garment; since none, though a friend, can bear to see him, blowing upwards at the nose, and from the dismal wound, black blood, by his own slaughter. O me! What shall I do? Who of thy friends will lift thee up, where is Teucrus? How seasonable were it, if he came to take away his fallen brother? O unfortunate Ajax! How great a man thou art, and what a sad state thou art in; how worthy art thou even of enemies to be lamented?

Cho. O wretched man! Too plainly, alas! your loss of reason discovered that you would at last plunge both yourself and us into these endless woes; for, in the furious tempest of your soul, how would you, with many bitter cries and groans, complain to me, night and day, of the injuries of the Atridæ? But that time was the beginning of mischief, when there was a violent dispute about the arms of Achilles.

Tec. Woe is me!

Cho. The generous sorrow wounds my heart.

Tec. Ah, me!

Cho. I wonder not why you lament, and again repeat the sounds of woe, lately deprived of such a friend.

Tec. These things but seem so to thee, but I perceive them strongly.

Cho. I agree with thee.

Tec. Ah me, my son! unto what yoke of servitude must we be brought? What tutors must we have?

Cho. Woe is me! Thou hast mentioned an [f] unspeakable deed of the two cruel Atridæ, in that mourning, but may God avert it.

Tec. It is through the gods that we are in such a state.

Cho. Sad and deplorable misery they have caused, and such a mischief the goddess, daughter of Jove, hath been the cause of for Ulysses's sake; and surely the daring man doth injure with a traiterous heart, and with much laughter ridicules the sad misfortune of Ajax; alas! alas! together with the two chiefs, the Atridæ, likewise hearing this news.

Tec. Though they laugh and rejoice at his evils, it is likely, though they desire him not alive, they will lament him in necessity of battle. For men of base minds, having in their hands a good, know it not before they have thrown it away. His death was more grievous to me than pleasant and delightful to them; for, what he desired to obtain, he hath obtained, the death he longed for. What, therefore, can they laugh at in him? He died for the gods, not for them.

Cho. Let Ulysses therefore vainly insult him, Ajax is no more for them; but for me he is gone, leaving me nought but grief and sorrow.

Tec. Woe is me!

Cho. Hold thy peace, I think I hear the voice of Teucrus, loudly lamenting, with a cry agreeable to the present misfortune.

[f] *Unspeakable deed.*] *Gr.* ἄνανδον, the same with ἄῤῥητον, and both signify anything mysterious, and which cannot be uttered; and so it is understood by St. Paul, 2 Cor. ch. xii. v. 4; or, secondly, an ominous word; or, thirdly, anything foul or dishonourable, as fornication and uncleanness, and in this sense it is taken here.

ACT IV. SCENE VI.

Teucrus, Chorus, Tecmessa.

Teu. O most beloved brother Ajax, hast thou gained thy desired death, as fame reports?

Cho. The man hath perished, Teucrus, be assured of that.

Teu. Woe is me, my sad fortune.

Cho. Since our case is thus.

Teu. Ah, me!

Cho. It is time for us to mourn.

Teu. O sad affliction!

Cho. Too great, indeed, Teucrus.

Teu. Alas! where is his son? In what part of the Trojan land is he?

Cho. He is alone in the tent, Teucrus.

Teu. Wilt thou not lead him hither with all speed, lest any of the enemies snatch him away, as the whelp of an absent lioness; go, hasten, labour; for all love to insult the dead.

Cho. And while he yet lived, Teucrus, the man desired that thou shouldest take care of him, as thou dost.

Teu. O the most sad of all the spectacles to me that ever I saw with my eyes! O most afflicting of all journeys to my very soul, which now I came, O most loved Ajax, when I heard thy sad fate, as I was in chase of the enemies, and searched out their retreats; for the report of thy death, as by some god was quickly spread through all the Grecian army, which I, wreched, hearing, though absent far lamented. But now, seeing the thing, I am undone. Woe is me! Go, uncover him, that I may see the whole mischief; O miserable spectacle! O desperate audacity! What grief thou dying hast left me! [*They uncover the body of Ajax.*] Whither is it possible for me to go? To whom? Since I

assisted thee not in these afflictions. Will Telamon, thine and my father, receive me with a kind countenance and favourable, coming without thee? How? He to whom, even being fortunate, nothing is pleasant so as to make him laugh. He, what will he conceal? What will he not say? That I a bastard, begot of a captive taken in war, betrayed thee by fearfulness and cowardice; thee, O most loving Ajax! or by fraud, that thou dying, I might enjoy thy wealth, being dead, and throne. Such things the angry man, morose with age, will say, though without just cause moved to strife: in the end, an exile, I shall be banished the land, to be a slave instead of a free man, through his reproaches. This is my case at home. But at Troy I have many enemies, and few friends. All these things will befall me, since thou art dead. Woe is me! What shall I do? How shall I take thee from this cruel sword? O wretch! by what murder hast thou expired? Thou, therefore, sawest that in time, Hector dead would kill thee. See by the gods the fortune of two men, Hector, with the same belt that was bestowed on him by Ajax, was dragged after the chariot of Achilles, until he breathed out his soul; Ajax, having his gift, by that suffered a fatal death. Did not a fury make this sword; and the belt, Pluto, that cruel workman? for I dare say the gods contrive these and such things always for men. But to whose opinion these thoughts do not agree, let him maintain his own, but I approve these.

Cho. Proceed not too far, but consider how thou mayest repose this man in his tomb, and what thou suddenly shalt say; for I see an enemy, and perhaps laughing at our ills, say what a wicked man might say.

Teu. Who is he whom thou seest coming from the army?

Cho. Menelaus, for whom we undertook this voyage.

Teu. I see him, he is not hard to be known, for he is near.

ACT VI. SCENE VII.

Menelaus, Teucrus, Chorus.

Men. Thou, I [g] bid thee not prepare that body for sepulture, but suffer it to lie as it doth.

Teu. Why hast thou given out that pernicious decree?

Men. It pleaseth me and him who commands the army.

Teu. But wilt thou not say what reason thou canst give?

Men. Because we hoped we brought him from home a friend and a confederate to the Grecians; but I find him more an enemy than the Trojans; who designing the slaughter of the whole army, a night-wanderer, directed his arms against us, that he might kill us; and unless some god had overthrown his purpose, we had had the same fortune

[g] *I bid thee not prepare that body for sepulture.*] It was an usual thing with the ancient Grecian heroes to deny their enemies burial after death; so Achilles punished Hector, and in the Antigone Creon decreed that the body of Polynices should lie exposed a prey to the dogs and fowls of the air. And, ordinarily, several persons, who, by their actions while alive, or the aggravating circumstances of their death, were thought unworthy of any funeral, were so exposed, as those who betrayed or conspired against their country, villains guilty of sacrilege, tyrants, persons killed with lightning, some offenders who suffered capital punishment, such as were guilty of self-murder, &c. So that, upon several accounts, Ajax seems to have forfeited his right to burial. For which reason, Aristotle tells us, Ethic. Nicom. lib. v. cap. 2, that his body was not reduced to ashes, according to the usual custom, but privately interred, it having been declared by Calchas to be a profanation of the holy element to consume in it the bodies of such as had occasioned their own death.

which hath befallen him, and suffered an unhappy fate, and he had lived. But now the god hath changed his intended mischief, and made him fall on flocks and herds. Wherefore there is no man shall have power to bury his body in a tomb; but, cast out on the yellow sand, he shall be food for the sea-birds; wherefore thou needest not to exert thy fierce rage, for, if we could not overcome him while he lived, we will entirely command him dead, though thou wilt the contrary; for living, he never would listen to my commands: and that is the part of an ill man, while he is a subject, not to listen to those who are placed over him; for in no city the laws can well prevail where fear is wanting; nor can an army be well governed which hath neither fear nor awe. But it becomes a man, though he be great in body, to think that he may fall through even a small evil; but who hath fear and likewise reverence, know that man hath safety in himself. But when injuries prevail, and every one doth what he will, then think this city will fall at last from happiness to the lowest degree of misery; therefore, let there be seasonable awe, and let us not think, if we do what we please, that we shall not suffer again what may displease us; these mutually succeed each other. Before he was a flagrant injurer, but now I take my turn to triumph. And I precaution thee not to bury him, lest thou fall thyself into the grave.

Cho. Menelaus, take care, lest while you deliver those grave maxims you become injurious to the dead.

Teu. I should not wonder at a man who is mean in pedigree, if he offends, since they who seem to be born gentlemen offend so in their words. Go, speak again from the beginning, will you not say that you brought this man a confederate to the Grecians? Did not he sail hither as governor of him-

self? How do you govern him? How is it lawful for you to rule a people whom he brought from home? You came hither a Spartan governor, not to govern us, nor can it be that you have more right to govern him than he to govern you. You sailed hither a prince, indeed, though not governor of all, so as ever to rule Ajax. Therefore, govern those who are your subjects, and instruct them with those grave speeches; but I will lay him in his sepulchre, as it is just I should, though you say the contrary, or any other commander, not fearing your presence; for he fought not for the sake of your wife, as those hired for war, [h] but for the oath's sake by which he was sworn, not for you, for he thought none worthy for whom to come hither. Wherefore, bring with you several heralds and the army to prevent me; for all your noise I will not be moved from my purpose, how great soever thou art.

Men. I like not such a tongue in adversity.

Teu. Harsh things, though they be most just, are grating.

Men. This archer seems not to think meanly of himself.

Teu. It is not a mean art I have learned.

Men. Greatly wouldest thou boast if you bore a shield.

Teu. [i] Even light armed I am a sufficient match for thee, when thou art better armed.

[h] *For the oath's sake.*] When all the princes were gathered together to court Tyndarus's daughter, he made them all swear to fight for him who married her, if any should offer to take her away by force.

[i] *Even light-armed I am a sufficient match for thee.*] This kind of ribaldry is beneath the dignity of tragedy, for it is merely added by the poet to prolong the scene, while he loseth the passion proper to it. How τοξότης comes to be a reproachful name will be evident from hence. Among the different soldiers of which the Grecian armies were composed, the ψιλοὶ or τοξόται seem to have been but of inferior rank, for their business was

Men. Your tongue shews that your anger is great.

Teu. It is lawful greatly to think with justice.

Men. Is it just that he fare well who hath killed me?

Teu. Killed you! a grievous thing you have spoke, though you are dead you live.

Men. It was God preserved me; as to him I am dead.

Teu. Do not, therefore, dishonour the gods, by whom you are preserved.

Men. Do I, therefore, dishonour the laws of the gods?

Teu. You do, if you permit not the burial of the dead.

Men. Not of those who are my enemies; that is but just.

only to sling stones, and shoot arrows at their enemies, thereby to annoy them at a distance, but were unfit for close battle, but those who fought with shields and spears were of much higher esteem, and generally protected the former in the fight. For this reason, Menelaus called Teucrus, a little before, tauntingly, τοξότης, an archer. This is apparent as from this place, so from the testimony of Homer, who tells us that Teucrus retired behind the shield of Ajax for protection. Il. θ. v. 266.

Τεῦκρος δ' εἶνατος ἦλθε, παλίντονα τόξα τιταίνων,
Στῆ δ' ἀρ ὑπ' Αἴαντος σάκεϊ Τελαμωνιάδαο,
Ἐνθ' Αἴας μὲν ὑπεξέφερεν σάκος, αὐτὰρ ὁγ' ἥρως
Παπτήνας, ἐπεὶ ἄρ τιν' ὀϊστεύσας ἐν ὁμίλῳ
Βεβλήκει, ὃ μὲν αὖθι πεσὼν ἀπὸ θυμὸν ὄλεσσεν.
Αὐτὰρ ὃ αὖτις ἰὼν, πάϊς ὡς ὑπὸ μητέρα, δύσκεν
Εἰς Αἴανθ'· ὃ δέ μεν σάκεϊ κρύπτασκε φαεινῷ.

Teucer, the ninth from these, at length appear'd,
And all his bows for certain death's prepar'd;
Behind the shield of Ajax close he stood,
Which, whensoe'er the warlike chief remov'd,
Around on all he casts his angry eyes,
Threatening destruction to his enemies;
Whom when his arrows wounded had, or slain,
Back he betook him to his shield again.
So timorous boys, approaching ills to shun,
With eager haste to careful mothers run.

Mr. Hutchin.

Teu. Was ever Ajax your enemy?

Men. He hated his hater, be assured of that.

Teu. You was his deceitful and corrupt judge.

Men. That matter was over-ruled by the judges, and not me.

Teu. So, privately, you may be the cause of many mischiefs.

Men. This talk shall turn to your sorrow.

Teu. No more, perhaps, than we shall be cause of your sorrow.

Men. One thing I tell you, this man shall not be buried.

Teu. I tell you the contrary, that he shall be buried.

Men. I have once seen a man bold in speech, urging the sailors to sail in winter, whose voice you would not hear when he was oppressed in the sad tempest, but hid under his clothes, lay to be trampled on by every sailor that would. So a storm, rising from a small cloud, would soon suppress you and your proud speech and loud clamour.

Teu. And I have seen a man, with folly fraught, who insulted his neighbour in adversity; and one seeing him, like me, and in anger like, said this: O, man, do not abuse the dead, if thou dost, know thou wilt suffer for it. So another, who was present, admonished the wretch: I see him, and I think he is no other than you; have I not well explained this saying?

Men. I go hence, for it were a vile thing to be heard to contend with words, with one whom we may restrain by force.

ACT IV. SCENE VIII.

Teucrus, Chorus.

Teu. Be gone, and it is a most vile thing for me to hear a vain man talk base words.

Cho. There will be a trial of great strife, but hasten Teucrus, as quick as thou canst hasten, and prepare a hollow grave, where he may have a spacious monument among men for ever famed.

ACT IV. SCENE IX.

Teucrus, Chorus, Tecmessa, Eurysaces.

Teu. And in due season his son and wife are present, to prepare a tomb for this dead unhappy man. O child, come hither, stand near, and as a suppliant touch thy father who begat thee, and kneel down on your knees, holding in your hands my hair, your mother's, and your own, [k] a treasure for supplication, but if any one of the army should put you away by force from this dead body, unburied and neglected let him lie on the ground, quite from the root with his whole race extirpated, as this hair which I now cut is held; keep him, let none move you, but down on your knees and hold him. And you [*to the Chorus*] approach not as weak women instead of men, but assist until I go and take care for a sepulchre, though none allow it.

[*Here Tecmessa and Eurysaces kneel by the body.*

ACT IV. SCENE X.

Chorus, &c.

STROPHE I.

When will the number of those long years have an end; those years which I consume in nought but the continual toils of war in this vile Trojan land.

[k] *Treasure for supplication.*] This ἱκτήριος θησαυρὸς, or supplicating treasure, which consisted of locks of hair, was of the same use as in Oedipus the ἱκτήριοι κλάδοι, namely, to add a greater solemnity to the ceremonies, and gain the favour of the gods to which they made supplications.

ANTISTROPHE I.

I wish he had first vanished into air, or descended to the grave, the common receptacle of all who shewed the Grecians the use of arms, the sad cause of endless woes. Fatal his art has been to all mankind.

STROPHE II.

He, unhappy wretch, neither allowed me to partake of [1] the delights of crowns or cups, nor the sweet sound of music, nor to pass my time in the nightly delights of love: but robbed me of love, and thus I lie neglected, my hoary hairs being drenched in the cold dews, the remembrances of Troy.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Before martial Ajax was my defence against nightly fear and arms, now he is oppressed with dismal fate; what pleasure shall I ever hereafter have? I wish I were where the imperious surge dashes against the woody promontory which overlooks the sea, beneath the high lands of Sunium, where we might salute sacred Athens.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Teucrus, Chorus, Tecmessa, Eurysaces.

Teu. Seeing the general Agamemnon furiously approaching, he seemed to me as if his angry looks

[1] *The delights of crowns.*] It was a custom with the ancients as well to wear crowns as to have the choicest of music in their banquets: these crowns consisted of the choicest of flowers artificially woven together. Hence Hor. lib. i. od. 38.

Displicent nexæ Philyrâ Coronæ.

See Dacier's notes upon that ode. Here the Poet after many turns of raillery in the former scene, more fit for comedy than tragedy, at last returns to himself. Yet the Scholiast saith, that to talk of love as affairs here stand is unseasonable.

portended the reproachful speeches which his tongue will utter.

ACT V. SCENE II.

Agamemnon, Teucrus, Chorus, Tecmessa, Eurysaces.

Agam. They tell me that thou hast freely dared to bawl out bitter expressions against us; thou, I say, [m] the son of a captive: if thou hadst descended of a mother nobly born, highly thou wouldest have boasted, and mounted aloft: since thou, though nothing thyself, hast sided with him who now is no more, and swore that we came hither as neither governor of the army, or the fleet, or of thyself; but Ajax was himself a ruler, as thou sayest. Are these not sad reproaches to be heard of slaves? Of whom hast thou so proudly talked? Where did he go or stand where I did not? Are there no men among the Grecians but him? Think you we have severely decreed the armour of Achilles from Ajax? Yet if you think we have been partial, will it not at last suffice you, being overcome, to submit to what so many judges have decreed? But will you always maintain the old quarrel against us by public reproaches or secret frauds, though overcome? According to such manners no law can subsist, if we should repel those who overcome by law, and make those first who are last. But such things must be prevented. Nor are broad thick men the strongest, but those who are wise, overcome every where. The ox with a broad side by a small whip driven

[m] *The son of a captive.*] Here he reproacheth Teucrus with his mother, who was daughter of Trojan Laomedon. The Grecians called all foreigners, especially the Trojans, barbarians. Hence Hor. l. ii. od. 4.

Barbaræ postquam cecidere turmæ.

goes right in the way; and I see that soon this remedy must be applied to you, unless you will have a little prudence, who daringly reproachest for a man who is no more but a shadow, and freely usest thy tongue: will you not at last be wise, nor consider whence you are born? bring hither some free man who may speak for you to us, for I understand not your speech, nor can I hear that barbarian voice.

Cho. I wish it were both your minds to be wise, for I can commend nothing to you better.

Teu. Alas! how soon among men all kindness for the dead slips away, and is quite forgotten, since this man hath not so much remembrance of thee, Ajax, as to repay thy kindness with a small return, whom thou many times didst defend with the hazard of thy life in battle: but all those things are gone and vanished. O thou who hast spoke many and useless words, dost thou not remember when, he coming alone, set you free, when you had been inclosed by batteries, put to flight, and reduced to the greatest streights in the fight? When the fire burned in the uppermost seats in the ships, when Hector leaped the trenches, who was it that dispersed the gathering storm? Was it not he who did it [n] who you say went in no danger, did he not perform those noble acts? And when alone he met Hector alone, by choice and uncommanded he opposed him. [o] He threw not in a false lot, a piece of moist earth, but one which should first leap from the crested helmet.

[n] *Who you say went in no danger.*] This is spoke in contradiction to what Agamemnon said before, where did he go or stand? &c.

[o] *He threw not in a false lot.*] *Gr.* δραπέτην. Primarily it signifies a fugitive or runaway: but here, by a metaphor, it signifies a lot, which avoids coming out of the helmet, lest the owner should be sent to undertake the combat. The poet alludes to a piece of craft which was once used by Cresiphontes, in casting lots for Messene with the sons of Aristodemus; the former threw into the pitcher a lot made of wet earth, that it might stick to the bottom.

This he did, and I was by, I that slave born of a barbarian mother! thou wretch, to what didst thou refer when thou saidst so? [p] Know you not who was your father's father, old Pelops, a barbarian and Phrygian, and Atreus who begat you, a most impious man, who laid before his brother a supper of his own children; and you was of a Cretan mother, with whom your father taking an adulterer, delivered her a prey to dumb fishes; and being such a one dost thou reproach me with my descent who am born of my father Telamon? Who performing the greatest deeds in the army obtained my mother, who was of the royal race of Laomedon, a select gift the son of Alcmena gave him: and since I am well descended of two noble parents, shall I shame those of near kin to me, whom thou now afflicted in such a misfortune, dost cast away unburied, nor art ashamed to speak it: therefore assure yourself of this, if you cast him away, you shall cast us [q] all three away: since it is plainly better for me to die fighting for him than for your wife and brother.

[p] *Know you not who was your father's father.*] Teucer having been reproached by Agamemnon for his low pedigree, like Achilles, returns the reproach, and rehearses Agamemnon's, telling him that his grandfather was a barbarian, his father a vile murderer, and his mother a foreigner and an adultress: whom, having been vitiated by a servant, his father gave to a sailor with a command to throw her into the sea; but he disobeyed that command. Her story is in the Cretan women of Euripides.

[q] *All three away.*] The Scholiasts differ in their opinions what three are here meant by Teucer; whether himself, Agamemnon, and Menelaus; or himself, Ajax, and Agamemnon; or lastly, himself, Tecmessa, and Eurysaces. The old Scholiast favours the first opinion; but it is not possible to conceive that Teucer should be so vain as to think himself able to oppose both the Atridæ together. Triclinus inclines to the second, as if Teucer had said, I will kill you first though I die in his defence, &c. But as Teucer was here endeavouring to move Agamemnon to pity, it is probable he would endeavour it by that miserable spectacle of Eurysaces and Tecmessa, sitting in a suppliant manner before the corpse, as they had been desired to do by Teucer.

Wherefore look to it, it no less concerns you than me; for, if you injure me in aught, you will wish some time you had been more fearful than bold to me.

ACT V. SCENE III.

Chorus, Ulysses, Agamemnon, Teucrus, Tecmessa, Eurysaces.

Cho. O king Ulysses, you are come in season, if you are come not to increase, but appease this strife.

Ulys. What is the matter, ye princes, for from far I heard the voice of the Atridæ concerning this noble carcase.

Agam. Is it fit we should bear most vile speeches from this man?

Ulys. What speeches? for I pardon that man who hearing reproaches returns them again.

Agam. He heard some reproaches, for he acted dishonourably towards me.

Ulys. What did he do to you so as to merit that affront?

Agam. He says he will not suffer this dead carcase to be without burial.

Ulys. May a friend speak the truth, and yet continue in his former friendship.

Agam. Speak, for I were unwise if I allow it not, since I esteem you the greatest friend of all the Grecians.

Ulys. Hear me now; nor, by the gods, suffer this man to be cast out unpitied; let not violence by any means overcome you to hate him so much as to trample upon justice: for this man was once to me the greatest enemy in the army, since the time I overcame in the trial about the arms of Achilles: but, though he is so great an enemy to me, I would not dishonour him so as to deny, that I have proved

him the greatest man of all the Grecians who came from Troy, except Achilles. Wherefore it is not just that he should be dishonoured of you; for it is not him but the divine laws you violate: it is not just to injure a great man, though he be dead, not although you hate him.

Agam. Do you contend with me, Ulysses, about him?

Ulys. I hated him while it was just to hate.

Agam. And even dead is it not just that you insult him?

Ulys. O Agamemnon, glory not in advantages not fairly got.

Agam. [r] It is not easy for a king to be religious.

Ulys. But it is a good saying, [s] honour is due to friends.

Agam. It becomes a good man to obey those in power.

Ulys. Peace, then you overcome when by your friends you are prevailed upon.

Agam. Remember to what man thou grantest this favour.

Ulys. This my enemy was yet a great man.

Agam. What dost thou do, thus to respect thy dead enemy?

Ulys. With me compassion overcomes enmity.

Agam. Such are a stupid kind of men.

Ulys. Many there be, now friends, who may hereafter turn enemies.

[r] *It is not easy for a king, &c.*] Because often exigencies of state and maxims of policy require them to act unjustly for the public good: yet this so open a confession hardly becomes Agamemnon himself or any prince to make in such a case.

[s] *Honour is due to friends.*] Here Ulysses argues against Agamemnon by a moral precept, as if he should say, every man ought to listen to his friend when he counsels well, therefore you ought to listen to me: to whom Agamemnon answers by another, viz. that good men ought to obey their prince, so ought you to obey me, and not give your advice.

Agam. Dost thou therefore like to have such friends?

Ulys. I like not a stubborn disposition.

Agam. Thou makest us now appear timorous.

Ulys. No, but rather just before all the Grecians.

Agam. Dost thou therefore advise me to suffer this dead body to be buried?

Ulys. I do, and I myself shall come to this.

Agam. It is always thus, every man labours for himself.

Ulys. For whom should I rather labour than for myself.

Agam. This shall be called thy deed, not mine.

Ulys. According as you act, you shall every where be reckoned good or bad.

Agam. But be assured of that, that I could grant thee a greater favour than this; but he shall, both in life and death, most hated be to me: but you may do as you please.

ACT V. SCENE THE LAST.

Chorus, Ulysses, Teucrus, Tecmessa, Eurysaces.

Teu. Whosoever, Ulysses, denies that you are a wise man is himself unwise.

Ulys. Now, Teucrus, from this time forward I declare to you, that as much as he was before my enemy, I am now his friend, and desire to help to bury this dead body, to labour with you, and leave nothing unperformed which men owe to the greatest heroes.

Teu. Excellent Ulysses, in every thing I commend thee, thou hast disproved my bad opinion of thee: though thou wast to him the greatest enemy of all the Grecians, alone thou hast holpen him, nor couldest bear that thyself alive shouldest injure him

being dead; as that furious commander and his brother would have cast him forth reproached, without sepulture. And may father Jove, chief of Olympus, and the avenging furies, and recompensing vengeance, miserably destroy those villains, as they unworthily and with reproach would expose this corpse: but thee, O son of old Laertes, I fear to suffer to touch this sepulchre, lest I should do what might be uneasy to the dead; in other things assist us, if thou wilt: bring any other from the army to officiate for thee, I shall not grieve thereat: other things I will prepare; thou hast discharged the duty of a good man towards us.

Ulys. I would have helped, but if it be not acceptable to you that I should do it, I go hence commending your opinion. [*Exit Ulysses.*

Teu. Enough of time is past, some quickly prepare a deep grave, others lay the tall tripod over the fire, to prepare the sacred washings for the dead body, and let one troop of soldiers from the tent bear his armour, warlike ornaments: and thou, O child, as well as thou canst lovingly touch him, and raise up his sides with me: for his veins, yet warm, send upward his black blood. Let every one present, who calls himself a friend to Ajax, hasten and help this brave man, than whom no better lives while he survived: this I affirm.

Cho. [t] Even wise men learn many things by experience; but the wisest of men are not able to foresee what will happen hereafter.

[t] *Even wise men learn, &c.*] See the notes on Oedipus Tyrannus, Act V. Scene the last.

THE

TRAGEDY OF ELECTRA.

Dramatis Personæ.

Tutor to Orestes.
ORESTES, Prince of Argos, son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra.
ELECTRA and CHRYSOTHEMIS, his sisters.
PYLADES, Prince of Phocis, friend to Orestes.
ÆGISTHUS, King of Mycenæ, and husband to Clytemnestra.
CLYTEMNESTRA, his queen.
Chorus, composed of the principal Ladies of Mycenæ.

SCENE—before the Royal Palace at Mycenæ.

ELECTRA.

THE ARGUMENT. — *The subject of this tragedy is Orestes's return from Phocis, whither he had been sent an infant by his sister Electra, from the cruelty of Ægisthus and Clytemnestra, and likewise the method he took to revenge his father's death, by theirs who had murdered him. But the poet calls it Electra, for the sad complaints which that princess makes for the death of her father, her sufferings under the tyrannical government of his murderers, the supposed death of her brother, and her excessive joy when he is discovered to her. The other two Greek tragedians have likewise treated upon this subject, but their tragedies are very different.*

This of Sophocles exceeds the other two, yet is it not without its faults, but they are such as its beauties may very well atone for. The unity of time, place, and action, he well observes; the thoughts are noble, and the diction beautiful. The chief fault of which the poet is guilty, is in one part of Electra's character, who, though she is represented every where as a princess of an heroic and generous disposition, yet such cruelty as she expresseth in promoting her mother's death is not at all becoming her sex, and the theatre is, or ought to be, an enemy to all kind of cruelty. However, Euripides is still more faulty in this kind, for his character of her is more cruel than that of Sophocles or Æschylus; and, the Choëphori of the latter, in which he hath treated on this subject, scarce deserved the name of a tragedy: but as this art was not arrived at any great degree of perfection in his time, he is excusable.

The moral of this fable is helped out by the late return of Orestes from Phocis, which was twenty years after his departure from Argos; which is, that though the divine justice long defers the punishment of the wicked, yet it will at last overtake them; and that there are no crimes God will punish with more severity than murder, adultery, and usurpation.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Tutor of Orestes, Orestes, Pylades.

Tutor. O son of Agamemnon, who formerly led the Grecian troops against Troy, hence you may descry the dearest prospect to your longing eyes. [a] Here on the right hand is the ancient city of Argos, and the forest of the [b] mad daughter of Inachus: there, Orestes, is the Lycian forum [c] of the god of day, and there on the left is the famous temple of

[a] *Here on the right hand is the ancient city of Argos.*] The Scholiast seems to make Mycenæ the same with Argos, but they are distinguished by Horace, ode 7. lib. i. Argos was the ancient seat of the kings of the Argives, and was built about the time of the patriarch Jacob.

[b] *Mad daughter of Inachus.*] Io is here meant, who, being beloved by Jupiter, was by him turned into a cow, that thereby she might be safe from the jealousy of Juno. Juno, understanding this, sent Argos, who had a hundred eyes, to keep her; but Jupiter sent his sly son Mercury, who killed Argos and turned him into a peacock: at this Juno, enraged, inspired Io with madness, whereupon she ran into Egypt, and was there worshipped by the name of Isis, and the sea she passed over was from her called the Ionian sea.

[c] *Of the god of day.*] *Gr.* λυκοκλόνῳ θεῷ. The various reasons assigned why Apollo is so called are his being a shepherd to Admetus, and so destroying wolves, wherefore wolves were sacrificed to him; or because that animal was sacred to him, as the hind to Diana; whence the Argians had wolves stampt on their money, as the Athenians had owls: but the most probable reason is this; Apollo is the sun, at the appearance of which the λυκόφως, or morning dawn, disappears, it being of the same colour with a wolf. Therefore I translate it the god of day. He had a very ancient temple at Argos, which is here called Ἀγορὰ Λύκειος, wherein was a fire which was said to have descended from heaven: there were also two temples, one in Thebes and another in Athens, sacred to the same god, called Λύκεια, or γυμνάσια Λυκείου Ἀπόλλωνος. Dr. Potter tells us, that the Lycean forum, at Argos, was dedicated to him, in memory of his delivering the Argives from wolves.

Juno: the city at which we are arrived is [d] rich Mycenæ, and this is the bloody house of Pelops's sons. It was from hence I took you from your sister's hand, to save you from your father's cruel destiny. Since then I have with much care brought you up, that being arrived at this age you might revenge your father's death. Now, therefore, Orestes, and you most faithful Pylades, we must seriously consult in a short time what is to be done: for now the clear light of the sun cheers up the morning voices of the birds, and the dark night is vanished with the stars. Before any comes out of the palace we must join in close debate, since we are arrived at a juncture which admits of no delay, but demands speedy execution.

Orest. Thou faithfulest of friends, and best supporter of my sinking fortunes, who daily shewest me some fresh tokens of thy affection and tenderness for me! As a generous courser, who, though old, loses not his courage in the greatest extremities, but kindles into his ancient fires; so you not only excite me by your counsels, but give me your example. Wherefore give earnest attention to my words, and correct me if you find I speak not to the purpose. When I came to consult the Pythian oracle, that I might learn how I could take revenge of the murderer of my father, Phœbus gave me this answer, which you shall hear. That I must steal upon him unprovided of arms or troops, and with my hands take just revenge, by killing him. And, since we have heard so plain an oracle, you, going when you find a favourable opportunity, may know all that

[d] *Rich Mycenæ.*] This epithet is given to Mycenæ both by Homer, who calls it πολυχρύσοιο Μυκήνης, and Horace, who calls it *Dites Mycenas*, lib. i. od. 7. It was thus enriched by Agamemnon; but, after his death it began to decay, and in the first year of the 78th Olympiad, 466 years before the birth of our Saviour, was entirely demolished by the Argians.

passeth in the palace, that when you have seen all you may give us a perfect account. For, at this age, and after so long time since they saw you, they will not know you, nor will they have the least suspicion of you, being thus equipped. Tell them that you are a Phocean stranger, sent by a [e] man of Phanoteus, for he is their chief ally; and tell them, [f] confirming it by oath, that you are sent to give an account, that Orestes died a violent death, [g] tumbled from his chariot at the [h] Pythian games. Be that thy tale. But I, after I have adorned my father's tomb, as Apollo commanded me, with libations and hair clipt from my head, will come hither again, bringing in my arms the brazen urn, which you know is hid hard by in a thicket, that we may more easily deceive the assassins, by bringing them the confir-

[e] *A man of Phanoteus.*] Phanoteus is a village in the neighbourhood of Delphi, which was formerly called Panope, as Strabo tells us. Πανοπεὺς δ' ὁ νῦν Φανοτεὺς, ὅμορος, τοῖς περὶ Λεβαδίαν τόποις.

[f] *Confirming it by oath.*] One might with some seeming justice object, that Sophocles in these words encouraged perjury: but the Scholiast very well clears him from the imputation of this crime, in these words: Δεῖ γὰρ αὐ ἰὸν πείθεσθαι τῷ θεῷ τὸ πᾶν δόλῳ πράσσειν παρακελευομένῳ. ὥστε ἐν οἷς δοκεῖ ἐπιορκῶν δυσσεβεῖν, διὰ τῶν ευσεβεῖ πειθόμενος τῷ θεῷ. For he ought to obey the god who exhorts him to do every thing by fraud; so that wherein he seems to act wickedly by forswearing himself, he therein acts piously in obeying the god. And thus is Abraham justified, when he would have offered up his son Isaac; and the Israelites likewise, when they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and spoiled them. Exod. xii. 35, 36.

[g] *Tumbled from his chariot.*] Here is a very considerable fault in the constitution of this piece, for the Pythian games, where Orestes is here feigned to be slain, were not instituted until five hundred years after he was dead; this falsehood ruined the probability of the piece, of which it is the foundation. Sophocles need only have feigned, as Æschylus did, that he was killed some other way: it is true Virgil hath as great an anachronism, yet the absurdities of one do not justify those of another.

[h] *Pythian games.*] They were first instituted in honour of Apollo, for killing the serpent Python.

mation of the agreeable news, that my body is burnt and reduced to ashes. Why should it grieve me to pass for dead, since it is plain by my actions that I am alive, and am about to gain immortal honour; for I am persuaded that no unfortunate oracle can be attended with so much advantage: [1] for I have often seen wise men falsely reported to be dead, and after, when they have returned home, they were honoured more; so I promise myself happiness, that after I have every where spread the report of my death, I shall appear as a star to my enemies, and shall still shine. But O my father's land, and gods who there preside, receive me kindly in these enterprizes; and thou, O my father's palace, for I come to wash away those stains by which thou art polluted, incited by the gods; send me not away dishonoured out of the land, but greatly enriched, and possessor of the palace. I have said enough. Be it thy care, old man, now going away, to execute thy charge, and we will retire; the season is now favourable which decides all affairs among men.

Electra within.] Woe is me, a wretch!

[1] *For I have often seen wise men, &c.*] The Scholiast tells us, that Sophocles in this place understands Pythagoras, who inclosed himself in a hole in the earth, causing his mother to give out that he was dead; and afterwards appearing, taught the doctrine of transmigration of souls, confirming it by his own example, saying, that before the Trojans, he was Æthalides, the son of Mercury, afterwards Hermotimus, and last of all Pythagoras. But it is not probable that Orestes should hint at the history of a philosopher, who did not appear in the world until six hundred years after his death; some, indeed, suppose that he meant Ulysses, particularly Dacier, who in ascribing this action to him saith: *Comme Ulysse, qui après avoir passé pour mort pendant plusieurs années, arrive chez lui, tuë les poursuivans de sa femme, et rétablit l'ordre et la tranquillité dans ses estats.* But, with submission, I must, with the Scholiast, be against this notion; for, since oracles, which were consulted on that occasion, declared that he was alive, and would certainly return, he was not looked upon at Ithaca as actually dead.

Tutor. I think I hear from within the gates [k] some of the servants weeping.

Orestes. It is poor Electra: wilt thou that we stay to hear her sorrows?

Tutor. By no means; we will enterprize nothing before we have performed the commands of Loxias, and from thence we will begin pouring out libations on your father's tomb; these things will gain us victory and power of doing what is to be done.

ACT I. SCENE II.

Electra alone.

Elect. O, sacred light and air, equally surrounding the earth, woe is me! How often hast thou heard my complaints, how many repeated blows with which I strike my breast hast thou seen, when the dark night is past? For what is done in the night, my loathsome bed and sorrowful chamber are conscious of, how I lament my miserable father, whom, in a barbarian land, cruel death bore not away. But my mother, and the consort of her bed, Ægisthus, split his head with a bloody axe, as the wood-cutters do an oak. No lamentation is heard from any other but from me, for you, O father, so unjustly and so miserably slain. But I will not cease from lamentations and sad complaints, while I behold the twinkling stars, and while the sacred flambeaux of the day affords me light; but, like the miserable daughter of Pandion, who hath lost her young, I will make my cries heard all around before my father's gates. O, house of Pluto and

[k] *Some of the servants weeping.*] The Tutor, hearing Electra weeping, judges her to be a servant, for neither did that time of the day, the action, or place, agree with a person of her rank, yet it is her, whereby we may judge of the excess of her sorrow.

Proserpine! [1] O, infernal Mercury, and sacred execration! and ye furies, the venerable children of the gods! You see those that are unjustly slain, and stolen embraces: come, O help me to revenge the murder of my father, and send my brother to me, for, alone, I cannot bear this pressing burthen of grief.

ACT I. SCENE III.

Electra, Chorus.

Cho. O, Electra, daughter of a most unnatural mother, why dost thou so inconsolably grieve, lamenting Agamemnon, who so long ago fell into the snares of a most deceitful wicked woman, and was slain by her impious hands? May he perish who committed these crimes, if it be just for me to say so.

Elec. Offspring of noble parents, thou art come to comfort me in my sorrows; I know, and am sensible my grief is too extravagant, nor am I ignorant of all that you can allege, yet will I never cease to lament my murdered father. Wherefore, my companions, who so well repay the kindness which I have for you, suffer me here, I beseech you, to pine away with grief.

Cho. But neither with lamentations or prayers shall you raise your father from the lake of Pluto, the general rendezvous of all the world; but, by this complaining you augment your woes, and perish in those evils for which there is no remedy; for,

[1] *Infernal Mercury.*] He was, according to the poets, the messenger of all the gods, and his office was to conduct departed souls to their desired Elysium. Hor. lib. i. od. 10.

Tu pius lætis animas reponis
Sedibus————

why dost thou abandon thyself to unsupportable sorrow?

Elec. He must be very insensible who could forget his father who died so miserably. But for me, my greatest comfort is to imitate the plaintive bird, the [m] messenger of Jove, who always laments her dear Itys. O, most miserable Niobe, I worship thee as a goddess, who turned into a stone sepulchre for ever weepest.

Cho. Thou art not the only of all mortals who hath known sorrow; wherefore, why dost thou exceed all those to whom thou art related in excess of grief? [n] As Chrysothemis, and Iphianassa, and Orestes, kept in private, who support their afflictions.

Elec. O, happy Orestes! whom, in an estate worthy thy royal birth, the noble land of Mycenæ

[m] *Messenger of Jove.*] The swallow,—so called from giving notice of the approaching spring; or, rather, the approaching day;—since the ancients called Jupiter the day, according to Macrobius. Saturn. lib. i. cap. 15.

He is feigned, by the poets, to have been first called Progne, the daughter of Pandion, king of Athens: she married Tereus, king of Thrace, and, being desirous to have her sister Philomela with her to keep her company, sent Tereus for her; but upon the road he ravished her, and cut out her tongue, lest she should discover him. But she represented the story in needle-work so well, and sent it to her sister, that she soon perceived her husband's villany; to revenge which, she murdered their son Itys, and sat him before them to be eaten; at which Tereus, enraged, ran at her with a drawn dagger, but she fled, and was turned into a swallow, Tereus into an owl, and Philomela into a nightingale, and Itys into a pheasant. Hor. lib. iv. od. 12.

——— *Ityn flebiliter gemens;*
Infelix avis. ———

[n] *Chrysothemis and Iphianassa.*] Euripides, and other poets, contend that Iphigenia and Iphianassa were the same, with whom Triclinus agrees. But, with submission, that must be a mistake; since the former had been sacrificed by her father to Diana, at Aulis, before his death, and Sophocles speaks of the latter as alive; besides, the old Scholiast cites an author, who says Agamemnon had four children.

will receive, when Jove shall deign to conduct him hither. I continually in this miserable state wait for him, abandoned by all the world, without children, without marriage, and am always wet with tears. These are my sad evils; but he forgets all his sufferings, and those accounts of mine, of which I have informed him; for what false message does he not send? He is very impatient to see me, yet that impatience makes him not hasten his coming.

Cho. Cheer up, dear princess, cheer up. Great Jove is in heaven, who sees and governs all things, to whom remit your excessive anger, and be content, nor yet forget your enemies. Time is a god which never stays, nor will the son of Agamemnon, who possesses Phocian ° Crisa's verdant bank delay his return, nor the god who reigns over Acheron, his revenge.

Elect. But much time of my life is gone without hope, nor can I still preserve the least, who fade without children, whom no friend protects. But, as a stranger unworthy my royal birth, I lodge in my father's palace, clad with vile garments, and know all the extremities of want.

Cho. O miserable report of your father's return! and miserable night when he lay in his palace! Since there he received his mortal wound. That cruel deed Deceit commanded, Lust slew him; but both prepared themselves for that crime by another; whether it were some god or man who did it———

Elect. O that day which of all days was most bitter to me! O night! O dire griefs of a supper when my father was assassinated by those perfidious wretches; my dear father, the blows which then

° *Crisa's verdant bank.*] Crisa, or Crissa, a town of Phocis, near the Corinthian bay: it was built by Crissus, the son of Phocis.

they gave you, have been fatal to me likewise. O, may great Jove grant they may suffer a punishment equal to their treachery; nor may they ever taste delight, who committed so horrid a crime.

Cho. Look that you say not overmuch; hast thou no thought how great evils thou bringest upon thyself? And do ye not see that, by your impatience and seeking continually to raise new disturbances in the palace, you only aggravate your evils? It is dangerous to attack those invested with a regal power.

Elect. The greatness of the evil forces me to it, nor am ignorant of my anger, I know it; but in such sad sufferings I can never abstain from these imprecations. From whom, O beloved race, should I hear a comfortable word? From whom, who thinks with any reason? Wherefore, let me alone, let me alone, comforters; these complaints I will for ever utter, nor will I ever cease from murmuring, but for ever will lament here.

Cho. I speak with all the tenderness of a faithful mother, that you would not heap sorrow upon sorrow.

Elect. Tell me what other evil have I to fear? How can it be well done for me to disregard the dead? Can any one be so unnatural? If there were, I would not be honoured of those; nor, if I lived with one so meek as should forgive such wrongs, would I, in complaisance to him, withhold from my father his due tribute of bitter sorrows. But, if the wretched murdered king, who is now but earth and nothing, lies miserably abandoned, and they suffer not a punishment equal to their crime, shame is no more on earth, nor piety among mortals.

Cho. I came hither, princess, more for your sake than my own; and if I speak not what pleaseth thee, thou hast prevailed, and I submit to thee.

Elect. I am ashamed, O dear virgins! if I seem

to you too feeble, nor better able to support my afflictions, I cannot resist the violence of my evils. O forgive me! for how could any princess, well descended, seeing her father's evils, forbear to mourn like me? which I, both night and day, see rather growing than decaying; to whom, first from my mother who bore me, every thing proceeds which is most cruel; then in my father's palace I live with his murderers, and am governed by them, am forced to ask and receive of them? Then, what days do you think I pass, when I see Ægisthus sitting on my father's throne, and wearing the same garments with him, and sacrificing to the household gods where he murdered him? And I see their last injury, the murderer in my father's bed with my wretched mother, if it be right to call her mother, who is so vile as to live with such a villain, and fears no fury; but as if she had nothing to do but to laugh and triumph in her crimes, when that day returns wherein she slew my father by fraud, in that day she appoints dances, and sacrificeth flocks to the solitary gods. I, unhappy wretch, who am a witness to these execrable deeds, can do nought but weep and languish, and deplore the miserable banquet, called the Supper of Agamemnon, by myself alone; nor is it permitted me to shew the excess of grief my heart would wish; for my mother, great in words only, raises her voice, charging me with these reproaches: "O "impious wretch! dost thou alone perceive thy "father's death? Is no other in grief but you? "May you wretchedly perish, nor may the gods "below ever put an end to thy complaints." Thus she ordinarily reproaches me; but when she hears from any that Orestes is coming, then bitterly she bawls out, standing before me, "Are you not the "cause of this? Is not this your work? Who, "stealing Orestes from my arms, privately sent him

" to a foreign land? But be assured you shall " suffer a punishment equal to your crime." Thus she talks with impudence and rage, and her noble spouse, being present, encourages her in this raillery; that effeminate wretch, who is a reproach to mankind, who makes wars only in concert with women. But I, still expecting Orestes, the healer of these evils, do miserably perish; and that prince, always deferring to come and execute what he hath promised me, hath ruined my present and future hopes. In such ills, my friends, we can neither be wise nor pious, but they change our natures, and force us to be bad.

Cho. Speak, tell me. Dare you speak this language while Egisthus is in the palace, or is he gone from home?

Elect. Certainly he is absent: think not if he were at home, that I could have the liberty to stay without the gate; but now he is in the fields.

Cho. If it be so, I dare with so much the more courage join in your discourse.

Elect. As he is absent demand what you will.

Cho. I ask thee what sayest thou of thy brother? is he about returning, or doth he still continue absent? I would know this.

Elect. He tells me he will come, but doth not perform his promise.

Cho. He who hath in hand a matter of great consequence ordinarily loves to take long deliberation.

Elect. But I did not take long deliberation when I saved him.

Cho. Be of courage, princess, he is too generous to abandon his friends.

Elect. I still hope, or I had not lived so long.

Cho. Say no more, madam, for I see your sister Chrysothemis, bearing in her hands sepulchral offerings, which are ordinarily made to the dead.

ACT I. SCENE IV.

Chrysothemis, Electra, Chorus.

Chry. What noise is this, sister, you make before the palace-gates? hath not long time yet taught thee to forbear this vain satisfaction of abandoning yourself to unprofitable griefs? I am no less sensible than you of our miseries, and if my power answered to my desires, I would shew what I think of them; but in the state I am in, I think it more prudent to [p] moderate my resentments, and not to cry out vengeance against my enemies, when I cannot hurt them; so I would have thee do. Although, what you judge I know is just, not what I say; yet the only way to live free is to obey those in all things who have an absolute power over us.

Elect. It is a sad reproach that thou shouldest be born of that father whose daughter thou art, and yet forget him, and be so slothfully complaisant to thy mother; for all these your admonitions are learnt of her, and you say nothing from yourself. Then chuse one of these two faults, confess thou art out of thy senses, or if thou art in thy senses, thou desertest thy friends, who saidst just now, if thou hadst strength, thou wouldest shew thy hatred of them; but while I desire to use my utmost efforts to revenge my father, you not only assist not, but attempt to divert me from my purpose. These things shew your fearfulness; wherefore teach me, or learn yourself from me, what advantage should I gain by ceasing from these mournings? Do I not

[p] *Moderate my resentments, &c.*] Literally translated it will be to sail with narrower sails. A metaphor from sailors, who, when the winds are violent, contract their sails, lest their ship should be overwhelmed.

live? It is true I live miserably, but yet I live, and that is sufficient for myself. I am troublesome to those perfidious wretches, and by that means afford pleasure to my dead father, if there be any pleasure among the dead. And you, who boast you hate them, in word alone you hate; your actions shew your words are false, who pass your life with your father's murderers. For me, I can never submit to them, though any one would give me those gifts with which you are so much delighted; let a rich table stand before you, and your life rolls in pleasure; but let that only be my food, not to do things so mortifying. I desire not to enjoy your honour, and, were you prudent, you would renounce it. But now, while you may be called the child of the best of fathers, you are called your mother's; so that, in this betraying your dead father and your friends, to all the world you will pass for a wicked woman.

Cho. Nothing in anger, by the gods, since you might both profit by each other's words, if you knew how to follow her counsel, and she your's likewise.

Chry. I am accustomed, ladies, to hear these discourses from her; nor would I again have urged her to repeat them, but I heard some great mischief is like to befal her, which will restrain her from making these tedious complaints.

Elect. Speak, tell me what mischiefs; if thou wilt tell me any greater than these I suffer, I will not contradict thee.

Chry. Then hear the sum of what I have to tell; they will, if you cease not from these mournings, send you there where you will never see the light of the sun, but, alive in a subterraneous prison, an exile from this earth, you shall chaunt out your misfortunes; wherefore, look to yourself, nor blame

me at last when the evil is come; it is still soon enough to be more prudent.

Elect. This then is what they resolve to do with me.

Chry. Yes, when Ægisthus comes home.

Elect. O that therefore he would return with speed, for my sake.

Chry. Why, O wretch? What hast thou wished for.

Elect. That he would come home, if he designs to do what you say to me.

Chry. What, that you may suffer so cruel a punishment? Whither do thy thoughts lead thee?

Elect. To fly as far as possible from them and you.

Chry. Have you no care of your present life?

Elect. My life is so happy that I have reason to admire it!

Chry. It would be so if you knew how to be wise.

Elect. Teach me not to be traiterous to my friends.

Chry. I teach you not, but to submit to those in power.

Elect. Submit to them yourself as long as you will, it agrees not with my character.

Chry. But that is good counsel which would direct you not to fall through rashness.

Elect. If we must fall, we will fall in revenging our father.

Chry. Believe me, my father would pardon us all these complaisances.

Elect. These are discourses which wicked persons only will approve.

Chry. Will not you then follow my counsel?

Elect. By no means; I am not so void of sense.

Chry. Then will I go whither I was sent.

Elect. Whither wouldest thou go? To whom dost thou bear these sacrifices?

Chry. My mother sends me to offer libations on the tomb of my father.

Elect. What hast thou said? What! to him whom above all men she hates?

Chry. Whom herself slew, that you would say?

Elect. Who gave her this counsel? Whom doth that act oblige?

Chry. I believe some terrors, caused by a dream she had last night, put her upon it.

Elect. [q] O! the gods of my father, assist me immediately.

Chry. How doth that terror raise you up any hopes?

Elect. If you will tell me the vision, then I will tell you that.

Chry. I can say but little.

Elect. But speak it, for often short speeches have ruined and raised up men again.

Chry. 'Tis the report, she thought our father returned again into the world, and then seizing his sceptre which once he bore, but now Ægisthus, planted it in the middle of the palace; and that a green branch grew from it, wherewith the whole land of Mycenæ was overshadowed. These things a certain person who was present heard, when [r] she told her dream to the sun. I know no more than this, but that she sends me on account of this fear. Now, by the gods which preside over this land, I beseech you listen to me, nor fall by imprudence; for, if now you reject my counsel, afterwards you will be forced to submit, when you feel the severe scourge of high displeasure.

Elect. But, O beloved sister, lay none of those things on the tomb which you have in your hands,

[q] *O the gods, &c.*] Electra hearing of the vision which appeared to Clytemnestra, she prays that now at last the revenging gods would shew their power, and revenge the death of Agamemnon, which that vision seemed to presage.

[r] *She told her dream, &c.*] It was a custom with the ancients if they dreamed an unlucky dream to tell it to the sun in the morning; which, as it was opposite to the night, they thought would avert any evil which that dream might bring. Strange superstition!

nor is it just or pious to bring funeral sacrifices or libations from a woman that is an enemy to your father, but hide them deep in the dust, or throw them away to the winds, where none of them ever shall come to my father's sepulchre, that these treasures may be preserved for her under the earth until she dies; for, consider, I pray, if she were not the most insolent of women that ever lived, would she have adorned his tomb whom she killed with those hostile libations; or, [s] seems it just to you that our father should favourably receive these gifts upon his tomb, from her by whom, after she had basely murdered

[s] *Seems it just to you, &c.*] It appears, by these words, that the ancients thought men retained the same affections after death which they had entertained when alive. This further appears from the story of Eteocles and Polynices, Oedipus's sons, who having killed each other in a single combat, and, being burned in the same pile, the flames of their bodies would not unite, but, by parting from each other, demonstrated their immortal hatred when living.

Bianor's following epigram informs us of this.

Οἰδίποδος παίδων, Θήβη τάφος, ἀλλ' ὁ πανώλης,
Τύμβος ἔτι ζώντων αἰσθάνεται δοράτων.
Κείνης ἐτ' ἀϊδὴς ἐδαμάσσαλο, κὴν Ἀχέροντι
Μάρναντ', κείνων χὠ τάφος ἀντίπαλος.
Καὶ πυρὶ πῦρ ἤλεγξαν ἐναντίον. ὦ ἐλεεινοὶ
Παῖδες, ἀκοιμήτων ἁψάμενοι δορέων.

Within thy walls, O Thebes! two brothers lie,
Who, though deceased, cease not their enmity;
For, from their bodies on the pile do fly,
Enraged corpuscles justling in the sky;
With pointed fury eagerly they meet,
Then, in aversion, scornfully retreat.
Unhappy youths, by fates denied to have
The peaceful slumbers of a quiet grave.

There is a passage in Virgil to the same purpose. Æneid. vi. v. 655. *Eadem sequitur tellure repostos.*

So here Electra argues, that, as Agamemnon, though dead, had reason to hate Clytemnestra, who had so barbarously murdered him, it is but reasonable to think he would detest any offerings paid by her on his tomb.

him, [t] her arms were stuck with pieces of flesh cut from him; and who, to wash away the guilt of murder, had the courage to [u] wipe her bloody hands upon his wounded head? But, dost thou think these libations will free her from the guilt of the slaughter? It cannot be: but, quit your design, and, cutting from your head the ends of your hair, join with it that little which I have left to testify my wretched state; these gifts are but small, yet such as I have: and, with my hair, offer, likewise, my girdle, not enriched with ornaments of gold, and, falling down before him, pray that he may come from the earth a friendly assistant against our enemies, and send Orestes alive with a superior power to attack them; that, hereafter, with richer gifts we may crown his tomb than what we now bestow. For, I am persuaded that his care for us obliged him to send these dreams which have filled her with all this horror. Wherefore, sister, join yourself to me, labour for me and yourself, and that most beloved of

[t] *Her arms were stuck with pieces of flesh.*] It was usual for those who slew others to achroterize, or cut off pieces of the outsides of the flesh of the party slain, and fix them under their arm-pits, which would, as they supposed, disable him from sending furies from the dead to revenge the murder. The word which denotes this action, Sophocles takes from Eschylus, who hath the word ἐμασχαλίσθη. Thus was Deïphobus used by Helene, as we read in the sixth Æneid of Virgil.

Deïphobum vidi lacerum crudeliter ora,
Ora manusque; ambas, populataque; tempora raptis
Auribus, et truncas inhonesto vulnere nares.

Dacier.

[u] *To wipe her bloody hands.*] Another superstition much like the other was, that the murderer always took care to wipe his bloody sword and hands in the hair of the person slain, thinking with the blood to wash away likewise all the guilt of the crime. This resembles the action of which Solomon speaks, Prov. xxx. v. 20. "Such is the way of an adulterous woman, she eateth and "wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness."

Dacier.

all men, which is now in the grave, our common father.

Cho. This maid speaks piously, and thou, if thou art wise, wilt follow her counsel.

Chry. I will follow it; for, when your demand is just, I have no reason to oppose it, but to hasten to action. I will keep this as a secret, and adjure you, my friend, to do the same, for, if our mother hears it, this attempt will be fatal to me.

ACT I. SCENE V.

Chorus.

[x] STROPHE.

If I am no mistaken prophet, nor deprived of all my prophetic light, the Goddess of Vengeance comes, who always knows her time, her hands are armed with power and justice, and very soon too you will see her. The agreeable recital of this dream gives me this confidence, for it is not possible that your father, king of the Grecians, should forget the treatment he received, nor that old brazen axe which slew him with most cruel blows.

ANTISTROPHE.

But the brazen-footed Fury will come with a

[x] *Strophe, &c.*] These words Strophe and Antistrophe, so often mentioned, denote the movements of the Chorus in singing; when they sung the Strophe, they turned from the right hand to the left; and when the Antistrophe, they turned from the left hand to the right. The Chorus was divided into two parts, or Semi-choruses, as among the Hebrews, the right hand troop began and advanced toward the left, and (according to the division of the theatre) this was the Strophe; and when that had done, the left hand troop turned toward the right, that was the Antistrophe. The Epodos is what the Chorus sang last, till they sang again after the next act.

hundred feet and a hundred hands, though now concealed in darkness, and will punish those wicked wretches for their criminal marriage; a marriage which a horrible assassination preceded. Wherefore I am persuaded that the aiders and abetters of this crime will feel the effects of this dream. For humane predictions are of no force to interpret dreadful dreams, or divine oracles, if this night's phantasm bring not to us some good effect.

EPODOS.

O most unfortunate chariot-race of Pelops! How unhappy thou wert to this land, for ever since that fatal moment in which [y] Myrtilus, with such indignity, was quite tumbled down from his chariot and thrown into the sea, this house hath been plunged into numberless calamities.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Clytemnestra, Electra, Chorus.

Clyt. You seem to walk about with liberty enough, because Ægisthus is not at home, who always restrained you, lest, when you are out, you reproach

[y] *In which Myrtilus.*] This Myrtilus was son of Mercury, and coachman to Oenomaus, who being corrupted by Pelops, with the promise of part of his kingdom, contending in a chariot-race with Oenomaus, caused the chariot-wheel in which his master rode to be so loose that it flew off, whereby he fell down and broke his neck. But Pelops ill rewarded him for his treachery, for, taking him with him when he stole Hippodamia and carried her into Peloponnesus, in their journey he threw him headlong into the sea.

The Scholiast, therefore, says, that Mercury revenged this baseness of Pelops to his son upon all his descendants. It appears by this passage, and several others, that the Pagans believed this truth, viz. that God would punish the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third fourth generation.

your friends. Now, as he is absent, you respect not me, nor cease to tell all the world that I abuse my power; that I treat you and yours with indignity. I do you no injury, but reproach you, being forced thereto by your reproaches against me. Your only pretence is, that I have slain your father; it is true, and know it was well done, and I deny it not. Justice slew him and not I alone, whom it was fit you should help if you were wise, because this, your father, whom you always lament alone of all the Grecians, had the barbarity to sacrifice your own sister Iphigenia, not considering a mother's throws, which fathers feel not. Pray tell me for what cause, for whose sake he sacrificed her? Will you say it was to pleasure the Grecians? What right had they to demand my children's blood? Or for his brother Menelaus? Why should he kill my children for him, and not, therefore, suffer punishment? Had not [z] Menelaus two children, who it was more fit should die than mine, being descended of that father and mother for whose sake this expedition was undertaken? Had Pluto more desire to devour my children than Helen's? Or will you say that wretched father had no love for my children, but Menelaus loved his? Do not these sentiments declare him unnatural? I think so. If I speak different from your opinion, your dead sister would

[z] *Menelaus two children.*] *i. e.* Hemione and Nicostratus, though Homer allows him to have had but one, viz. the former; but it is an usual thing with the Poets to contradict each other to serve their purpose. As what different tales do they tell concerning the fate of Ajax, son of Telamon? Some say that he was killed by Paris; others that he was by the Trojans so overwhelmed by stones and clay that he died, they having been informed by the oracle that he was invulnerable by sword; others, with whom Sophocles agrees, say he killed himself. No less variety is there in the relation of the fate of Antigone, every poet making use, among the various traditions, of that which best suited with his purpose.

speak no other language if she could speak. My conscience doth not reproach me for what I have done, but if I seem to you to think amiss, though my cause I think is just, convince me of my error with respect and by solid reasons.

Elect. You shall not say now that after I began to affront you with reproachful terms, you only answered me again in the same kind. But, if you will permit me, I would answer for my dead father, and for my sister, and contain myself within those bounds you have prescribed me.

Clyt. I permit you, for if you had always begun with me with this moderation, you had not heard those dismal reproaches you complain of.

Elect. Then I speak; you say you killed my father, and what more base confession can be made, whether you killed him justly or not? But I shall tell you that it was not justice which armed you against him, but the persuasion of a wicked man, with whom you now live. Examine Diana, who presides over rural sports, for whose punishment she bound our fleet in the port of Aulis. I will tell you, for from her we cannot know it. My father, as I hear, one day diverted himself at the forest of the goddess, raised up with his feet a spotted deer; in killing it he boasted, and happened to put out some vain word, and from that Latona's daughter, taking offence, stopt the Grecians in the port, that my father might sacrifice his child for a recompense of the beast, for such were the sacrifices of that goddess; nor was there freedom to be purchased upon other terms for the fleet to go home, or to Ilium; wherefore, my father, being forced by hard necessity, after much resistance, sacrificed her, not for the sake of Menelaus. But if, (for I will speak your purpose,) willing to oblige his brother, he sacrificed her, was it fit that he should, for that reason, die by your hand? By what law? Take care, lest

by establishing such a law among men, yourself have not reason to repent, and that law be fatal to you: for, if we may kill one for another, you yourself would first, if you had justice, die. But this is only a false pretext to serve your own purpose. If you will tell me, I pray, what is it that now obliges you to lead a shameful life, receiving to your bed that villain, by whose aid you killed my father, and get children, but reject the former legitimate children, who were descended of parents lawfully joined in marriage? How can I approve these actions? Or will you say this, that it was to revenge your daughter? Can you say that without a blush? Is it becoming you to marry our bitter enemy to revenge your daughter? One may not admonish you, but you report every where that we revile our mother. As for me, I esteem you no less my mistress than my mother, who live a miserable life, and am immersed in many evils, which proceed only from you and from your consort. But the other, which is at a distance, with difficulty escaping your hands, sad Orestes leads a miserable life. You often reproach me that I saved him that he might one day punish you and revenge my father; O! if I were able, I had done it, assure yourself of that: wherefore, if you will, declare it to all the world that I am the most wicked of all creatures, the most abuseful, the most impudent; if I have all these qualities, what can they say of me but that I resemble you.

Cho. I see the princess in great fury, but whether her fury be just or no, I know not.

Clyt. What shall I think of her who hath treated her mother with so much indignity? And at this age hath spoke with this impudence. Do you not think that she is capable to do the worst of deeds without a blush?

Elect. You mistake me; assure yourself that I am ashamed of those speeches, though I seem not to

you to be so. I understand that such language is very indecent in my mouth, but your hatred towards me and your actions force me to speak it; for ill deeds are learnt from ill ones.

Clyt. O, impudent wretch, do I and my deeds make you speak this language?

Elect. It is from you, not me, these discourses proceed; you commit these actions, and these actions produce these discourses.

Clyt. But, by Diana, I swear this impudence shall not escape unpunished when Ægisthus comes home.

Elect. You see how you are overcome with rage, though you gave me leave to say what I would; you have not patience to hear me.

Clyt. Wilt thou not suffer me to sacrifice in peace, since I have permitted thee to say thy pleasure?

Elect. I exhort you to do it. Sacrifice, nor complain that I interrupt your prayers, for I will say no more.

Clyt. Thou who art present [*to her maid*] bring offerings of all sorts of fruits, that I may lay on this altar suppliant sacrifices to Apollo, to deliver me from those terrors with which I now am seized. Now, O Apollo, whose image is worshipped before the gates of this palace, hear my secret prayers which I address to you, for I am here among mine enemies. Nor is it fit to reveal all my thoughts when she is near me, lest, out of spirit of hatred and calumny, she spread a vain report through all the city. But hear me who address myself to thee; if those spectres which I have seen this night, [y] these doubt-

[y] *These doubtful dreams.*] Gr. δίσσῶν ὀνείρων, alluding either to the two gates of sleep, viz. the horn and ivory, (for those dreams which entered at the former were supposed to be ominous of what would certainly come to pass; the other, on the contrary, were reckoned vain and of no effect.) Or, secondly, to two visions she had seen, namely, that for which she sent Chrysothemis to make libations and offerings on the tomb of Agamemnon, and

ful dreams, O Lycian king, be happy, grant that they may be accomplished; but, if unfortunate, return their effect upon my enemies, and suffer them not to cast me [z] from my present flourishing state, if any contrive to do it; but here for ever grant I may enjoy perfect health, and an uninterrupted course of prosperity, possess the palace, and sway the sceptre of the Atridæ, pass a quiet life with my friends with whom I am now, and with my children who have no ill-will towards me, nor importune me with their sad complaints. Hear our prayers, O Lycian Apollo, propitiously, and give us all other things which we ask; for, I am persuaded, that, being a god, thou art capable of knowing what I ask for in silence. Since Jove is your father, it is impossible your eyes should not penetrate the most hidden secrets.

ACT II. SCENE II.

Tutor, Chorus, Clytemnestra, Electra.

Tut. [a] You ladies of this land, how can I cer-

that for which she prays to Apollo; or, thirdly, to the doubtfulness of the dreams.

[z] *From my present flourishing state.*] Here is a very lively representation of the precarious state of the wicked, for Clytemnestra here thinks herself in a most flourishing condition, when she had not an hour to live; but is to die in a cruel manner by the hands of her own son: so, when the wicked think themselves most secure and say peace, sudden destruction comes upon them.

[a] *You ladies of this land, how, &c.*] Here comes in the Tutor, with his feigned story of the death of Orestes, killed in the Delphic games, which story, though feigned, is beautiful in its place, and fit to strike an audience with a tragical horror; for men are not only desirous in general to know of the death of any great man, but likewise the particular circumstances how he came by it. As to the part of Clytemnestra, it comes very *à propos*, the moment she had ended her secret prayers to Apollo for the death of Orestes and Electra.

tainly be informed? Is this the palace of king Ægisthus?

Cho. Stranger, it is; thou hast indeed rightly judged.

Tut. And is this his queen? for her majestic air and garb import she is no less.

Cho. It is true she is the queen.

Tut. Hail, queen! I come to bring agreeable news, both to you and to Ægisthus, from a friend.

Clyt. I receive the happy omen, but desire to know who sent you.

Tut. One of Phocis of the town of Panope hath sent this important news.

Clyt. What, stranger? speak: since you are from a friend, I know well you will speak nothing but what is agreeable.

Tut. In short, Orestes is dead.

Elect. Woe is me, a wretch; I am undone this day.

Clyt. What sayest thou, stranger? What sayest thou? Hear not her.

Tut. I say now, and said before, that Orestes is dead.

Elect. I die a wretch, I am no more.

Clyt. You mind your own affairs. But, stranger, tell me without disguise in what manner he died.

Tut. For that I was sent, and will speak all to the smallest circumstance. He coming to the famous assembly of the Grecian youths, to join in the Delphic games, no sooner heard the voice of the herald loudly proclaiming the foot-race, in which they first contended, but he presented himself at the barriers, shining with such a god-like lustre, that he gained the respect and admiration of all beholders. And as his person was glorious to behold, so were his actions, for he bore away the glorious prize of victory. I cannot, madam, give you a perfect account of all the actions of this prince, nor was I witness

to them; but this one thing I say, that he returned victorious in [b] the five conflicts which the heralds proclaimed according to the custom, and was celebrated with the loud acclamations of the people, who called him Orestes, the prince of Argos, the son of Agamemnon, who once raised a famous army of Grecians against Troy. This was his success. But when the gods resolve to afflict any, he cannot even who is strong escape. For the next day when the sun arose, which was the day of the chariot-course, he entered with [c] many other charioteers. When the judges of the game threw lots, and ranged in order the chariots by those lots, the signal given by the sound of a brazen trumpet, the combatants rushed forth, they likewise calling to their horses, shook the reins in their hands. The whole plain was filled with the noise of rattling chariots, the dust was likewise raised, and all mixed together, they nothing spared their spurs that every one might out-run his rival to get before the breath of his coursers, which breathed on them; and the breath of the horses, mixed with dust, raised such a cloud, that it quite hid their chariots from our sight. But the young prince near the last pillar still turned his axle-tree, and for that purpose letting go the horse, Siræus, on the right hand, stopped the other. Heretofore every chariot kept its right order, until the unruly horses of the prince of Thrace, by force bound forward and by making many turns, meet face to face with the Libyan chariots, and from this confusion one rushed forward and met another.

[b] *The five conflicts.*] Gr. Πένταθλα, viz. leaping, throwing quoits, casting darts, running, and wrestling. Simonides hath comprised them all in one verse,

Ἅλμα, ποδωκείην, δίσκον, ἄκοντα, πάλην.

[c] *Many other charioteers.*] Here I miss a few proper names which I thought to be of small importance, which I hope the reader will excuse.

In a moment this mischief was general, the whole Chrisæan field was filled with wrecks of horses. But an ingenious Athenian charioteer seeing this, turns aside his reins, and stopping his chariot made it stand still, thereby to avoid that confusion of horses, which perfectly resembled a ship-wreck in a tempestuous storm. But Orestes being arrived at the last column, whose horses were in the last rank, was confident he should gain victory. As he saw this young Athenian the only one that could dispute the prize, he made a smart noise about the ears of his swift horses, follows up, and both driving up, equalled the horse manes of each other; now one, now another outstrip each others chariot; and miserable Orestes directed right his other courses, his chariot still entire, until slacking the left rein, while the horse turned himself, imprudently he struck against the last column, broke the naves of the axle-tree, and falls down from his chariot; by his reins is dragged along, and, falling on the ground, his horses, in a furious manner, pursue their course. But when the multitude saw him fallen from his seat, they mourned the youth whose fate, after having given such proofs of his conduct and valour, was to suffer such ills. Now is he borne along the ground, now he raised up his legs toward the skies, and the charioteers who ran with him after many efforts restraining the race of his horses, loosed his miserable body, which was so bloody and so disfigured, that none of his best friends could know him; and presently burning him on a funeral pile, certain men of Phocis appointed to that purpose bear the sad remains of his body in a small urn, that he may obtain a sepulchre in his father's country. This is the news I tell you, and even the recital is afflicting, but we, who were witnesses of the spectacle, have been forced to avow that we never saw any thing so terrible.

Cho. Alas! it seems the whole race of our ancient kings is quite extinct.

Clyt. O Jupiter, what is this, shall I call it fortunate or evil! I see it is profitable, however; but that I preserve my life by my evils is a dismal state.

Tut. Why, madam, are you so concerned at this news?

Clyt. Is any thing so powerful as nature? For when we have brought children into the world, for the very worst treatment we cannot hate them.

Tut. As it seems, we came hither in vain.

Clyt. Not in vain. How doest thou speak in vain, since thou art come to me; bringing certain signs of the death of a son, who, forgetting that he was born of me, departed from my breasts which gave him milk, and tender education, and lived, an exile, with strangers; of a son, who, since he departed hence, never returned to see me, and accusing me for his father's murder, with dreadful threats so afflicted me, that neither night nor day sleep closed my eyes, but every moment I looked upon myself as a victim prepared for slaughter; but this day I am freed from fear both from Orestes and Electra; for this daughter was my greatest domestic evil, drinking my heart's blood; but now quiet, even from Electra's threats, I shall lead my life.

Elect. Woe is me, a wretch! Now, Orestes, is it time to deplore thy calamity, who, even in the state thou art in, provest the severity of a barbarous mother. By the gods this is not well!

Clyt. Not what you expected; but as he does, he does well.

Elect. [d] Hear, Nemesis, the dead prince, who appeals to you.

[d] *Hear, Nemesis, the dead.*] Nemesis is supposed to be the goddess whose particular care it is to punish all injuries which the living do in words or deed against the dead; thus, in the fifth act, Ægisthus, after having expressed his joy for the news of Orestes's

Clyt. She heard whom she should, and hath done them justice.

Elect. Now insult over us, Fortune hath favoured you.

Clyt. Will Orestes and you never cease these menaces?

Elect. We will not only cease, but will submit to you.

Clyt. I cannot sufficiently express my obligations to you for silencing this importunate wretch.

[*To the Tutor of Orestes.*

Tut. Therefore, since all things are well, I have nought to do but to return.

Clyt. By no means; that were poor recompense for the pains you have taken, and the service he did us who sent you, to let you return so quickly; but go into the palace, and let her, without, mourn the evils of herself and her friends.

ACT II. SCENE III.

Electra, Chorus.

Elect. What say you, my companions? Think you she sadly grieved, sent out a sigh, or shed one tear for her son, who met his fate in a cruel manner? No, but the wretch departed laughing. Woe is me, poor maid! O dear Orestes, who, dying, hast destroyed me; thou art gone and hast borne to thy tomb with thee the only hope I had, that you would sometime come to revenge my father and deliver me; but now whither must I go? I am alone, deprived

death, restrains his transports by these words: εἰ δ' ἔπεστι Νέμεσις, ὃ λέγω. Wherefore, Callimachus, in his Hymn of Ceres, speaking of the insolence of Erisichthion, says:—

Νέμεσις δὲ κακὰν ἐγράψαλο φωνάν.

Nemesis hath recorded this insolent speech.

of you and my father too, and reduced to the state of a slave to my bitterest enemies, the murderers of my father. Ye gods how am I fallen! But for the future I will not cohabit with these monsters. I will go and cast myself before this gate, where, deaf to the voice of comfort, I will wither out my life; and if the possessors of the palace are tired in seeing and hearing me, let them kill me; why should I desire to preserve that life which only serves to prolong my miseries?

ACT II. SCENE IV.

Chorus, Electra joins with the Chorus.

Elect. [e] Where are the thunderbolts of Jove? Where is the bright sun? Are they quiet, and overlook these things? Alas! alas!

Cho. Why weepest thou, princess?

Elect. Alas!

Cho. Do not exalt thyself, but wait God's leisure.

Elect. Thou undoest me.

Cho. How?

Elect. If thou wilt bring me any hope to comfort me, under the loss of those who are certainly dead, while I languish, thou wilt be but more troublesome, and augment my woes.

Antistrophe II.

Cho. [f] I know king Amphiaraus, being hid, was

[e] *Where are the thunderbolts.*] The Chorus in the former act comforts Electra with the hopes of Orestes's return, saying, cheer up, O child, great Jove is in Heaven, &c. but now, driven to despair by this message, and seeing Clytemnestra indecently rejoice at it, doubts whether there be a God to suffer such things.

[f] *I know king Amphiaraus.*] The story of Amphiaraus is thus: he was a very skilful soothsayer, and when Adrastus, king of the Argives, would assert the Theban crown to his son-in-law, Poly-

betrayed by the deceit of a woman for a golden bracelet, and now among the dead.

Elect. Alas! alas!

Cho. With an immortal soul he reigns.

Elect. Alas!

Cho. Alas! indeed, for that wretch perished.

Elect. Was not Eriphyle punished therefore?

Cho. Doubtless.

Elect. I know it well, for there was one who severely revenged the sufferings of Amphiaraus; but I have none to revenge my father's, but he whom I had is ravished from me.

STROPHE.

Cho. Princess, the most unfortunate that ever lived.

Elect. Alas! I know but too many sorrows; their number and duration too well I have learnt.

Cho. We know the cause of your lamentation.

Elect. Do not endeavour to comfort me.

Cho. What sayest thou?

Elect. There is no hope, my friends, for he is gone in whom my hopes were placed.

nices, he was desirous that Amphiaraus should accompany him to the wars; but he, knowing that the war would be fatal to him, declined going, and hid himself, lest he should be forced to go, his wife Eriphyle only being conscious to it. But Adrastus's wife, Argia, bribed her with a golden bracelet adorned with gems, and made by Vulcan, for which she discovered where he was, whereupon he was taken by force to the wars. When, therefore, he understood it would certainly be his ruin, he charged his son, Alcmæon, to kill Eriphyle, which he did accordingly, for which he was tormented with Furies so that he died, and Amphiaraus was swallowed up alive in the earth. This story Horace hints at as an instance, to shew the invincible power of riches,

———*Concidit auguris*
Argivi domus ob lucrum.

The Chorus here, to comfort Electra, compares Agamemnon to Amphiaraus, that as he is honoured among the dead for his knowledge in the art of prophecying, so will the other for his warlike exploits. To which Electra answers to this purpose, the case is different, for Amphiaraus had a revenger of his death, viz. Alcmæon, but my father's is lost in Orestes.

Cho. Fate attends all mortals.

Elect. And must all meet that fate by being draged along by reins, like that poor prince?

Cho. An unforeseen misfortune.

Elect. Why not? Since he died in a strange land, where I could not pay him my last offices.

Cho. Alas, alas!

Elect. Nor had he the honours of sepulture from me, nor have I shed tears on his tomb.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Chrysothemis, Electra.

Chry. Most loved sister, [g] I am so transported with joy, that I forgot the rules of decency, and came with speed: for I bring you most pleasing news, and declare an end of all those evils which heretofore you suffered.

Elect. Where can you find a remedy from our evils, for which it is not possible to find a cure?

Chry. Orestes is with us. I believe that it is as true as that you see me.

[g] *I am so transported with joy, that I forgot.*] Chrysothemis returning from the tomb, having offered her own and sister's hair, and finding the libations poured out by Orestes, and the bunches of hair, and that variety of flowers, proves, by a probable reason, that Orestes must be come, since that sort of libations could neither have been offered by Clytemnestra, Electra, or herself. This argument is answered by Electra, by giving Chrysothemis an account of the message of his death, and that she believed somebody had placed there his hair, &c. as monuments of dead Orestes. For thus Triclinius explains the word, Μνημεῖ Ὀρέστου τμηθεὶς ὁ βόστρυχος τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀπό τινος τοῦ αὐλῆ φίλων, ἐπετέθη τῷ τάφῳ τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος, ἵνα τὶς ὁρῶν αὐλὸν κείμενον, εἰς μνήμην ἀφικνῆται Ὀρέστου. *i. e.* A lock of hair cut from the head of some of his friends, was put upon the sepulchre of Agamemnon, that it might put any one who should see it lie in mind of Orestes.

Elect. But thou art mad, my sister, and laughest at thy own ills and mine.

Chry. No, I swear by our father's palace, I speak not these things to insult over your afflictions, but know he is present with us.

Elect. Ah me! Of whom have you heard this news to which you put such faith?

Chry. I received it from none but myself, having seen certain signs of his arrival, which I cannot doubt.

Elect. And what certain signs have you seen? What have you found, that you cheer yourself with such vain hopes?

Chry. Now, by the gods, listen to me, and when you have heard what I have to say, then you may call me wise or simple.

Elect. Speak therefore, if you find any pleasure in speaking.

Chry. I will inform you of all I know. When I came to the sepulchre of my father, I saw milk fresh poured, flowing in plenteous streams, and his repository round about adorned with all sorts of flowers. Being surprised at the sight, I looked round lest any man should observe me. When I saw all things in a profound silence, I approached nearer the tomb; and the first thing I saw was a bunch of hair newly cut. No sooner I perceived this, but the image of my brother, whose dear remembrance I always preserve, which is present with me in my dreams and imaginations, made me think it his hair. Then, taking it up in my hands, I spake no ill-boding word, but tears of joy ran down my eyes, and I was convinced, as I am still, that these ornaments could not come from any but himself. For with whom doth it agree but you and I to offer such libations? I did not that I know, nor you; for how could you offer them, to whom it is not per-

mitted to leave the palace [h] and go to the temples of the gods without punishment? Nor doth our mother's disposition incline her to offer such kind of libations; nor, if she did it, could she conceal it. Therefore doubtless these ornaments could not come from any but Orestes. Therefore, sister, be of courage, for the gods do not always take pleasure in our sufferings; heretofore our evils were without parallel, but this day will probably be a forerunner of much happiness to us.

Elect. O the folly! How I pity thee!

Chry. What is the matter? Is what I have said disagreeable to you?

Elect. You know neither where you are, nor where your thoughts wander.

Chry. Why should I not know what I saw with my eyes?

Elect. He is dead, thou wretch, and the deliverance he promised us is vanished; expect it not from him.

Chry. Woe is me! of whom did you hear this news?

Elect. From a man who was present with him when he died.

Chry. Where is he? I am in such an amazement that I cannot express it.

Elect. He is at home, and causeth our mother a great deal of pleasure.

Chry. Woe is me, a wretch! By whom were those funeral offerings placed at my father's sepulchre?

Elect. I suppose that some body placed there the monuments of dead Orestes.

[h] *And go to the temples.*] The wicked always think that God is ready to revenge the just whom they have injured, if they pray to him; therefore the murderers would not permit Electra to go to the temple, lest the gods, hearing her prayers, should take vengeance on them for the murder of Agamemnon.

Chry. Unhappy as I am, I running with joy brought this message, not knowing in what misery we are overwhelmed; but no sooner I am come, but have found, besides those former evils, others which oppress us.

Elect. You see what state we are in; but if you will follow my counsel, you will soon ease us of the burthen of our present ills.

Chry. Can I raise the dead?

Elect. That is not what I said; I am not so unwise.

Chry. What do you command which I can promise to perform?

Elect. It is only to have the courage to follow my counsel.

Chry. If it be for our advantage, I shall not refuse it.

Elect. You know that without industry nothing prospers.

Chry. I know it, and will take what share in the task my strength will permit me.

Elect. Hear now what proposal I make you. As to our friends you know we have none in the world, but death hath deprived us of them, and we are left alone. So long as I heard my brother flourished, I had hopes that he would sometime come to revenge the murder of my father; but now, since he is no more, I look to you, that, seconding my efforts, you would not refuse to kill Ægisthus, the author of my father's death. It is no longer time for me to conceal from you my design. Why will you continue slothful? And what well grounded hopes can you now have? You have no other comfort but to lament your past felicity; you have nought now but grief, and will miserably drag the remaining part of your life unmarried, nor need you hope that Hymen's flambeau ever will blaze for you; for Ægisthus is not so inconsiderate a man as to suffer your race

and mine to flourish, which would infallibly punish his crimes: but if you will follow my counsel, first you will shew the world that you preserve for your father and your brother those sentiments of piety which you ought to have; then, as you were born, so you shall hereafter be called free, when you shall obtain a husband worthy of the daughter of great Agamemnon; for good actions attract the eyes of all mankind. Do you not discern what a reputation you will acquire by obeying me? For what citizens or strangers, seeing us, will not give us these or the like encomiums? 'Do you see, friends, those two sisters, who by their courage raised their father's houses? Who, by exposing their own lives, revenged themselves, and slew their enemies in a time when they were most powerful? It is fit we all respect them, it is fit that all should honour them in our solemn feast, and in all the assemblies of the people, we are obliged to respect their virtue.' Such things will all the world say of us, so that dead or alive, glory will never forsake us. Wherefore, dear sister, be persuaded, do your father this service; arm yourself for your brother, deliver me from these evils, deliver yourself, and remember this, that it is a thing unworthy those who are nobly descended to live a servile life.

Cho. In such enterprizes prudence is necessary, both to him that speaks and him that hears.

Chry. That is true, ladies, and, if she were in her right senses, she would have proved it by better guarding her expressions before she spoke; what do you pretend to by arming yourself with this audacity, and calling me to your help? Have you forgot that you are a woman, and not a man, that your power doth not answer that of your enemies? Good fortune daily favours them, but hath deserted us, and quite left us destitute. Do you think it possible to enterprize the death of Ægisthus, and that they who

enterprize it can escape unpunished? Therefore, take care, lest these discourses which you hold should bring upon us greater ills, if any should chance to hear them; all that boasted reputation will stand us in little stead, if, after we have gained it, ingloriously we die. You will say, death is not to be feared; it is true; but, when we court it, life must be our lot; therefore, I beseech you, before we quite perish, and destroy our whole race, moderate your anger, and I will keep secret all that hath been said. For your part, be more wise, and remember your weakness, and let time teach you to submit to those who are more powerful than yourself.

Cho. Submit, for there is no greater gain that men can get than prudence and good sense.

Elect. You have said nothing unexpected, for I knew well that you would not fail to reject my proposal; but yet, however hazardous is that enterprize, I will perform it with my own hands; nor will I abandon my father.

Chry. Alas! I wish you had had the same generous sentiments when our father was assassinated, you had prevented our miseries.

Elect. I was always of the same disposition, but weaker then in spirit.

Chry. Study to be always of that spirit.

Elect. You only give me this advice because you will not join with me.

Chry. It is fit those who undertake to do ill deeds should do them alone.

Elect. Your prudence I love, but hate your fearfulness.

Chry. I will do my endeavour to hear you, since you commend me.

Elect. But you shall never have any commendation from me.

Chry. There will be time enough to prove that.

Elect. Begone, for I can find no help in you.

Chry. You might, if you could learn it.

Elect. Go, and tell all that hath passed to your mother.

Chry. I do not hate you so much as to do you so bad an office.

Elect. Consider to what dishonour you would bring me.

Chry. Not to dishonour, but to care for your own safety.

Elect. Must I then submit to your decisions?

Chry. When you are more wise, then I will submit to yours.

Elect. How sad is it for one who speaks so well to act so ill!

Chry. The reproach returns upon yourself.

Elect. What, do you think I speak not with justice?

Chry. But, sometimes justice is pernicious to its executor.

Elect. [1] I cannot digest those maxims.

Chry. If you will now act according to your own, hereafter you will have cause to commend mine.

Elect. I will pursue my enterprize without regard to what you say.

Chry. Is it your resolution? Will you reject my counsels?

Elect. Nothing is more pernicious than bad counsel.

Chry. You seem to mind nothing that I say.

[1] *I cannot digest those maxims.*] Electra rejects this answer of Chrysothemis, and with a great deal of reason; for, to observe strict justice in every instance is certainly the greatest injustice, according to that maxim, *Summum jus, summa injuria.* So Electra thought, that, how strict soever the laws might be against murder, yet, it agreed well with the laws of nature and reason to revenge her father's death, by killing his murderers.

Elect. It was not to-day, but long ago, I made this resolution.

Chry. I go hence, therefore, for neither dare you commend my words, nor I your humour.

Elect. Go; I will never, hereafter, communicate my designs to you, what endeavours soever you use to persuade me, for it is a great folly to mind vain things.

Chry. If you think yourself wise, think so still; but, when you have increased your evils by your imprudence, then you will commend my counsel.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Chorus, STROPHE I.

[k] Why, seeing the very birds in the air carefully providing nourishment for their parents, who gave them their lives, do we not act according to their examples? But, by Jove's lightning, and celestial Themis, long they shall not be unpunished. O Fame, so much revered of men, and the infernal inhabitants, proclaim the lamentable voice to the

[k] *Why, seeing the very birds.*] The Chorus, seeing the impatience of Electra to revenge her father's death, commends her courage, but blames the cowardice of Chrysothemis for forsaking her in so great a danger; but, according to the usual manner of the Chorus, doth not directly charge Chrysothemis with inhumanity, but obscurely hints it, and shews that στοργὴ, or natural love of near relations for each other, is a law impressed on the minds of all creatures, which she, in this instance, had broke. There is nothing more fit to shew the degenerate manners of men, who act without respect to the laws of nature, which should bind all creatures, than to shew that even the brutes love and cherish their kind.

Sed jam serpentum major concordia, parcit
Cognatis maculis similis fera.———— Juv. Sat. xv.

Atridæ among the dead, and discover these their reproaches.

ANTISTROPHE I.

That now at home all things are in disorder with their children, the two princesses of their family cannot live together, but are in cruel dissension. That Electra alone, abandoned by all the world, exposed to a thousand dangers, and always mourning the murder of her father, as the ever-lamenting nightingale, is not concerned to die, but is prepared to surrender her life, so she may have the satisfaction to make those two criminals fall as victims to her just revenge; for what princess of noble race could live in such a state?

STROPHE II.

For no generous person in adversity will purchase life at this price, by defacing his glory and his reputation to live in shame and infamy. Princess, the miserable life you have always led, and the continual war you have made against their crimes, ought to gain you this double praise, that you are the wisest and the noblest of children.

ANTISTROPHE II.

May you live in power and riches above your enemies, as much as now you are crushed under their power, since you have the courage to oppose your evils: and, by your piety towards the gods, have borne away the prize, in that which is the most sacred thing among men.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Orestes, Pylades, Chorus, Electra.

Orest. Ladies, have we been rightly informed? Doth this way lead us where we desire to be?

Cho. Where? What place do you seek for?

Orest. Ægisthus's palace.

Cho. Thou art come right, and hast had some skilful guide.

Orest. Which of you, ladies, will tell those within of the agreeable news of our arrival?

Cho. Let the princess, since it is fit a relation should tell it.

Orest. Go in, madam, and tell that some Phocians desire to see Ægisthus.

Elect. Woe is me! Do you bring a confirmation of that report which we heard?

Orest. I know not the report you speak of, but a certain old man, Strophius, sent me to speak something about Orestes.

Elect. What is it, stranger? How my fears seize me!

Orest. We come to bring the relicks of the dead prince, in that small urn which you see.

Elect. Woe is me! now the thing is plain, I can doubt no more of my miserable state.

Orest. If you mourn the death of Orestes, know that his body is in that urn.

Elect. Generous stranger, let me by the gods, if that vessel contains him, take it in my arms, that I may lament and mourn myself and all my family, with these ashes.

Orest. Grant her request, you that carry the urn, let her be who she will; for it is not out of hatred she urges this request, but she is one of his friends, or some near relation.

Elect. [*Taking the urn in her arms.*] [1]O sad

[1] *O sad monument of the most.*] This part of the fable is very moving of the passions; for, as upon hearing the passionate complaints of Electra, and for so just a cause, we must needs grieve with her; so are we affected with equal joy when she is surprised with the agreeable news that the person she speaks to is her brother. And thus, in Homer, Penelope grieves for Ulysses while he is present with her.

monument of the most beloved of men to me, the relicks of my dear Orestes! How different are the hopes in which I now receive you from those in which I sent you out? Now I carry thy ashes in my hands, but I sent thee from home strong, and in health. How do I wish you had been slain, before I formed a design to hide you, and send you into a strange land to save your life, that in that day you had died, and shared one common tomb with your father. Instead thereof, in a foreign land an exile, in a most cruel manner you have perished without your sister to pay you her last offices; nor had I the sad [m]consolation with my loving hands

[m] *Consolation with my loving hands to wash your mangled corse.*] The custom of washing dead bodies and anointing them with precious ointment and oil is very ancient, and was used in Greece long before Homer's time. Thus they anointed Patroclus,

Καὶ τότε δὴ λέσαν̓το, καὶ ἤλειψαν λίπ' ἐλαίῳ.

It is true, no other material is here mentioned but oil, or any where else in Homer, who frequently mentions this custom. Yet Athæneus will allow of no distinction between this oil and μύρον; or ointment, properly so called. The Greeks received this custom from the Phœnicians, and the Romans received it from the Tuscans, who were originally Tyrians. We read in Ennuis,—

Tarquinii corpus bona fœmina lavit et unxit.

So in Virgil, Æneid. ix. the mother of Euryalus is introduced, making the same complaints for her son, which Electra doth here.

——— *Nec tua funera mater*
Produxi, pressive oculos, aut vulnera lavi.

What pangs of grief my throbbing breast invade,
To think thy mangled carcass was not laid
Forth on its pile by me. Oh, sad surprise!
That I wa'n't bye to close thy beauteous eyes;
Just as th' expiring soul did take her flight
Into the regions of infernal night!
Oh! had I wash'd each wound, each sever'd vein,
When thou, scarce cold, laid'st welt'ring on the plain!

Mr. Abell.

Servius hath well remarked, that all the care of preparing the dead for burial belonged to near relations, but especially to the mother or sister; who, for that reason, were called *Funereæ, nam apud majores funereas dicebant eas ad quas funus pertinebat, ut sororem, matrem.*——POTTER DAC.

to wash your mangled corse; [n]nor have I collected your sad remains out of the funeral pile, as it was fit I should. Now, dear prince, strangers have given thee these marks of their piety, and this day have brought thee in a small urn. Woe is me! How unprofitable was the pleasing care I took to bring you up? Nor did your mother love you more than I, nor was your education the care of any other, in our house, but myself; I was always called your sister. Now all those things are gone, in one day dead with you, and the storm which carried you away hath ravished with it all my hopes. My father is gone; you have followed him; and I go to join you: yet our enemies laugh, our unnatural mother cannot resist her transports of joy. How many times have your private letters made me hope that you would come and punish her? But our miserable fortune hath prevented you from executing your promise, who hath sent you to me, instead of your lovely form, ashes and a vain shadow. Woe is me! O, miserable body! Alas! O most loved brother! Alas the day that ever I sent you into Phocis! How have you destroyed me! you have

[n] *Nor have I collected your sad remains out of the funeral pile.*] The original is ὅτε παμφλέκτῳ πυρὸς ἀνειλόμεν, ὡς εἰκὸς; ἄθλιον βάρος. Which the Cambridge edition, printed A.D. 1665, and another at Frankfort, 1549, both falsely render, *neque in ignem juxta morem levavi miserum cadaver.* This mistake will appear plainer by taking notice of the following custom of the ancients, which was thus:—After the body of the deceased was burned on the funeral pile, they collected the bones and ashes. Thus Homer says the brother of Hector did at his funeral. Il. ω. v. 792.

——————— Ἀυτὰρ ἔπειτα
Ὀστέα λευκὰ λέγοντο κασίγνητοί τ' ἑταροί τε.

His brothers, then, and friends search'd every where,
And gathered up his snowy bones with care.

Mr. Congreve.

This office Electra mourns here, that she had not performed to Orestes.

destroyed me, O dear brother. Wherefore, receive me into that urn with thee, permit my dust to be mixed with your's, that, hereafter, I may ever dwell with you; that, as we have had the same destiny during our lives, we may have the same tomb after death; for I see the dead do not suffer those ills which afflicted them during their lives.

Cho. Consider, Electra, you was born of a mortal father; Orestes, too, was mortal; wherefore, give not yourself up to unprofitable woes. Must we not all die?

Orest. [o] Alas! what shall I say? How am I perplexed? I can no longer be silent.

Elect. What sorrow is this which labours for its vent? why say you so?

Orest. Is this Electra, that celebrated beauty?

Elect. [p] It is the same, you see what remains of her.

[o] *Alas! what shall I say, &c.*] The remembrance here is double, for Electra first makes herself known to Orestes, by her excessive grief for the supposed death of her brother, and afterwards he is known to her by a certain token. The first remembrance, as it arises naturally from the incidents, and doth not appear to be invented, is certainly most ingenious, yet it is much inferior to the remembrance of Oedipus, for there is no peripetie or change of fortune; for, when they both remember each other, they do not yet change their fortune until the murderers are slain. But that of Oedipus not only ariseth more from the foundation of the subject, by a train of the most natural incidents, but is produced in the very moment of the peripetie. Electra's remembrance of Orestes hath still less art, which Sophocles used only for want of invention, for the mark which he makes use of to discover himself, which he calls σφραγῖδα παλῃὸς, as it is used on set purpose, and not produced by chance or a train of incidents, hath very little ingenuity in it. For the poet makes Orestes say what he pleases, and none contradicts him, and he might as well have said any other mark, and none could have opposed it.

[p] *It is the same.*] This seems more fitly to be spoken by the Chorus, otherwise Electra would seem to commend her own person, and besides, as the Chorus answered before, and confirmed the Tutor of Orestes, who thought Clytemnestra to be the queen, by her gorgeous habit; so, by a parity of reason, when

Orest. Woe is me, for thy too rigorous fortune!

Elect. Why, stranger, dost thou thus lament for me?

Orest. O, princess, whom unworthy treatment hath so changed!

Elect. I am the very wretch which you lament.

Orest. Alas! thy unfortunate state. [*Weeps.*

Elect. Why, generous stranger, dost thou look on me thus and weep?

Orest. How little have I known of my misfortunes?

Elect. How do you know them by what I have said?

Orest. Seeing you overwhelmed with numberless sorrows.

Elect. You have seen but the smallest part of my sorrows.

Orest. How is it possible to see any thing more grievous?

Elect. I am obliged to live with murderers.

Orest. Whose? what evil is that you inform me of?

Elect. Those of my father; then I serve them as a slave.

Orest. Who forces you to that sad extremity?

Elect. She is called my mother; but is nothing like a mother.

Orest. By what means, by force, or refusing you the necessaries of life?

Elect. By force, ill maintenance, and all the bad treatment she can devise.

Orest. Have you no person to assist you?

Elect. None: him whom I alone expected you have brought here reduced to ashes.

Orest. O unfortunate princess! thy sad state moves me to pity for thee.

Elect. Be assured thou art the only man that ever pitied my miseries.

Orestes doubts here whether this be Electra, being so disfigured, he is satisfied by the Chorus that she is; though most editors suppose Electra to make this answer.

Orest. Alone I come to testify the grief I feel for all your misfortunes.

Elect. Art thou one of our relations?

Orest. I would tell if I could assure myself of the fidelity of these women.

Elect. You may assure yourself, they are my ever faithful friends.

Orest. Then quit the urn, that you may hear the better.

Elect. Generous stranger, by the gods force me not to lay it down.

Orest. Submit to me, and you will not do amiss.

Elect. Now, I conjure you, take not away those most beloved relicks.

Orest. I say I will not leave them with thee.

Elect. Ah me, a wretch! O, dear Orestes, you still augment my evils if they wrest from my hands your ashes.

Orest. Conceive better hopes, you afflict yourself unjustly.

Elect. How do I afflict myself unjustly, if I deplore my brother's death?

Orest. But your brother refuses your tears.

Elect. Am I then unworthy to deplore my brother's death?

Orest. You are unworthy of nothing; but these complaints are not in season.

Elect. Why not in season, since I bear the body of Orestes?

Orest. But it is not Orestes's body, it is only feigned to be so.

Elect. Where then is the miserable prince's sepulchre?

Orest. No where; the living hath no sepulchre?

Elect. What sayest thou?

Orest. The truth.

Elect. Doth he still live?

Orest. Yes, if I am alive.

Elect. Are you he?

Orest. [q] Behold this mark of my father, then judge if I say true.

Elect. Most happy day.

Orest. I witness it is most happy.

Elect. Do I at last hear thy voice, my Orestes?

Orest. My sister, doubt it not.

Elect. Do I hold thee in my arms? [*Embraces him.*

Orest. And may this be an earnest of the pleasure you will ever have by my presence.

Elect. Most loved companions, behold Orestes, preserved alive by those arts which had reported he was dead.

Cho. We see him, princess, and at this event, so unexpected, a joyful tear falls from my eyes.

Elect. My dear Orestes, at last you are come, you have found, you see whom you desired to see, and who waited for you with so much impatience.

Orest. I am, but wait in silence, my sister.

Elect. Why?

Orest. It is better to be silent, lest any in the palace should hear you.

Elect. No; by the ever chaste Diana, I will never fear the women of this palace; they are a vile troop, who are only an useless burthen to the earth.

[q] *Behold this mark.*] *Gr.* σφραγῖδα παλεὸς, there are various opinions what this mark should be. Triclinius says it was the ivory shoulder which the gods gave Pelops, and appeared afterwards upon his descendants; others call it δακτύλιον, or *a ring;* another scholiast contradicts both these opinions, and says it was σφραγῖδα, ἤγουν τὸν χαρακτῆρα τῆ προσώπῳ καὶ τῷ λοιπῷ σώματος τὸν κατὰ πάντα ὅμοιον τῷ ἐμῷ πατρὶ Ἀγαμέμνονι, *the mark,* that is to say, *the make of his face, and of the rest of his body, every way like to my father, Agamemnon's.* The first opinion is most probable, both because a recognizance made by a natural mark is much better than any foreign or acquired one; and because several families had such natural marks by which they were distinguished from those of any other;—as the descendants of Cadmus, a lance; the Seleucides, an anchor.

Orest. But take care; you have experienced that there is in women sometimes a martial mind.

Elect. Alas! you have called to remembrance an evil that is too plain to be disputed, and which we can never forget.

Orest. I know all that; but, when it is a proper season, we will talk of these things.

Elect. It is always time for me to speak with justice, for I never yet curbed myself; and what should silence me now I am free?

Orest. I say that, too; but endeavour to preserve that liberty.

Elect. What must I do?

Orest. It is not now a proper time to use many words.

Elect. Who should oblige me now to be silent, since you are come in so miraculous a manner, when I had lost entirely all hopes of seeing you.

Orest. You see me now, when the gods ordained that I should come.

Elect. You have said something which gives me more joy than your return. If God moved you to come to Argos, then I suppose your arrival is the work of a divine power.

Orest. I would not forbid you to suppress your joy; but I fear lest you be over-much transported.

Elect. O thou, who, after so many years absence, hast at last happily returned to me, since thou hast found me in so bad a state, drowned in tears, do not——

Orest. What shall I not do?

Elect. Do not deprive me of the satisfaction which I find, in testifying the pleasure I have of beholding you.

Orest. Doubtless, nor would I suffer another to do it.

Elect. Dost thou permit me then?

Orest. How can I hinder you?

Elect. My friends, I heard the unexpected news of the death of my Orestes, and mourned with secret grief, nor did I interrupt with my complaints the recital of his death; but now I have you, I enjoy your most beloved presence, which I could not forget even in my afflictions.

Orest. Omit these superfluous speeches, and teach me not that my mother is wicked, nor how Ægisthus at home exhausts our father's wealth, which he unjustly hath ravished from us, your talk may deprive us of the proper season of action, but instruct me what is proper to be done this present juncture, whether, to revenge ourselves of our enemies, who triumph in our supposed misfortunes, we had best appear openly, or lie concealed. But, chiefly, beware lest our mother should discover any mark of joy in your countenance when we enter into the palace, but lament as for that false report of my death; when we have effected our enterprize, then will it be time to rejoice and laugh with freedom.

Elect. My brother, I shall ever take pleasure in what will be most agreeable to you. It is very just that I should obey you; since it is from you, not from myself, that all my happiness proceeds, nor would I purchase to myself the greatest treasures by giving you the smallest pain; that would not be to accommodate myself to my present fortunes. But, knowest thou what passeth in the palace? Why not, hearing Ægisthus is not at home; but our mother is alone within, you need not fear that she shall see in my countenance any marks of gaiety, for an old hatred glowed in me against her, and, since I have seen thee, I will not cease to weep tears of joy; for how can I refrain, who, after I had received you dead, see you alive? And you have affected me with such unexpected joy, that, if my father should return to life, I would not think it a greater miracle, but believe I see him; and since, therefore, thou

art arrived here so unexpectedly, do whatsoever your reason shall dictate; for me, though I were alone, I would not have failed in both these things, but would gloriously have delivered myself, or gloriously have died in my enterprize.

Orest. Be silent, pray, I hear a noise, somebody comes out of the palace.

Elect. Enter, ye Phocians, ye bring a message which nobody will reject, but will not long rejoice that they received it.

ACT IV. SCENE II.

Tutor, Orestes, Pylades, Electra, Chorus.

Tut. Most imprudent as you are, have you no regard for your lives? Are you entirely void of common sense, and do you not know that you are not only near, but even enclosed in the greatest dangers? Unless I had posted myself at this gate, to prevent any person from hearing, your designs had been in the palace before your bodies; but I have prevented that by my care. Wherefore, put an end to those long speeches, and these transports of joy, and come in speedily; it is dangerous to delay in such enterprises. Come along, it is now the very juncture for us to effect what we have begun.

Orest. What will be the consequence if I go in?

Tut. Very good, for none there knows you.

Orest. It seems, then, you have told that I am dead.

Tut. You pass with them for one of those among the dead.

Orest. Do they rejoice therefore? Or what do they say?

Tut. I will tell you when we have done, but she seems to be most happy who is least so.

Elect. By the gods, my brother, tell me who this is.

Orest. Do you not know him?

Elect. I have not the least idea of him.

Orest. Know you not into whose hands you once delivered me?

Elect. To whom, what dost thou say?

Orest. He to whose hands I was sent into the Phocian land through your providence.

Elect. Is this he whom alone of many I found faithful, when my father was murdered?

Orest. This is the same, inquire no more.

Elect. O day most beloved! O, only saviour of the house of Agamemnon, how did you come? Are you he who saved him and me from many evils? O most beloved hands always so assisting us! O how happy is your arrival! Why so long, when you were here, did you conceal yourself from me, nor make yourself known? How had you the courage to give me a thousand deaths by your discourses, while you had in hand enterprises most delectable to me? Hail, father! for I seem to behold my father. Hail! for know that, as I hated you the worst of all men, so I love you in one day.

Tut. Enough, madam, these moments are too precious; we shall have time enough to entertain you with this subject. Now, princess, it is time we hasten to action; now Clytemnestra is alone, and no man is within the palace; but, if you let so favourable an opportunity escape, prepare to oppose the strength and skill of greater numbers than these.

Orest. Wherefore, my Pylades, this affair requires no long discourses, but let us go in, that this business may be done as quick as may be, after we have worshipped our father's gods who are placed here before the palace-gates.

ACT IV. SCENE III.

Electra, Chorus.

Elect. O king Apollo, mercifully hear their prayers, and mine likewise, who often stood before you to present, with a liberal hand, such offerings as I could present you with, in my misery, and who come still to day with the same disposition to present the same sacrifices, that is to say, my prayers, my vows, and supplications. Now, O Lycian Apollo, I prostrate myself in your presence, and beseech you to be ready to assist our enterprise, and shew men that punishment which the gods reserve for their impiety.

STROPHE.

Cho. You see how Mars, who breathes nought but blood and slaughter, walks along; the inevitable Furies, which pursue evil actions, are in the palace; so that my predictions are not vain, but will soon be accomplished.

ANTISTROPHE.

For the young prince, armed to revenge the dead; enters into possession of his father's wealthy palace, having in his hands the avenging sword newly drawn; [r] but Mercury, the son of Maia, surround him with a dark cloud until the work is done. Vengeance is ready, and will soon be completed.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Clytemnestra, Electra, Chorus.

Elect. My dear companions, the princes present-

[r] *But Mercury, the son of Maia.*] He is esteemed the god of

ly will achieve their enterprize; but, be silent, make no noise.

Cho. Why, what are they now doing?

Elect. [s] She is providing all things necessary for the funeral supper of Orestes; but they stand close by her.

Cho. Wherefore did you rush out?

Elect. To guard, lest Ægisthus, on a sudden, should come undiscerned.

Clyt. [*Within.*] Alas! alas! the palace is deserted of friends, and full of murderers.

Elect. Somebody cries within; do you not hear, my friends?

Cho. Alas! I have heard what I cannot hear without trembling and horror.

Clyt. Woe is me! Ægisthus, where art thou?

Cho. Somebody cries again.

Clyt. O son, son, pity her who bore you!

Elect. But he had no pity from you, nor had he who gave him life.

Cho. O city! O miserable race! Now the fate of this day hath plunged you into the worst of miseries.

Clyt. Woe is me! I am struck. [*Within.*

Elect. [t] Strike; if you can, double the stroke.

deceit and fraud, whence he is called δόλιος, the deceiver. Homer, in the last Iliad, supposeth Priam, by his conduct, to have passed over all the Grecian camp, until he arrived at the tent of Achilles.

[s] *She is providing all things necessary for the funeral supper.*] Gr. Ἡ μὲν ἐ, τάφον λέβητα κοσμεῖ. We must understand (saith one of the Scholiasts on this place,) that the word τάφος signifies two things, either the place where the monuments of the dead are placed, or a supper which was made to comfort the relations of the deceased for their loss. So here, they had a supper for Orestes, who was supposed to be dead; as another of the Scholiasts says, who, further to explain ἐς τάφον, says, εἰς τὸ περίδειπνον τὸ ἐπὶ τῷ Ὀρέστῃ δοκεῖν ἀπολωλέναι.

[t] *Strike; if you can, double the stroke.*] The characters which Sophocles here gives Orestes and Electra are too cruel; and he who otherwise so well imitated Homer, yet here hath come very short of that great original; who, in speaking of the action of

Clyt. Woe is me! again.

Elect. I would they would do the same to Ægisthus.

Cho. The imprecations are perfected, they arise who are under the earth; for the dead return to shed the murderer's blood.

ACT V. SCENE II.

Electra, Orestes, Pylades, Chorus.

Elect. But they come, and their bloody hands drop with a sacrifice of Mars. Well, my brother, say how our affairs stand within.

Orest. Well, if the oracles of Apollo are true, the wretch is dead; you need fear no more the indignities you have suffered from that barbarous mother.

Cho. Cease, I see Ægisthus approaching near us.

Elect. Retire immediately to the entry, that, since you have so well begun, you may accomplish your enterprize.

Orestes, commends the murder of Ægisthus, but says nothing of that of Clytemnestra; being sensible that how great soever her crime was, yet it did not become her own children to punish it in that manner. The moral indeed is very good, namely, to shew that the divine vengeance will certainly punish usurpation and murder in the severest manner; yet that doth not excuse the atrocity of the fact. See Homer, Lib. iii. Odyss.

Τῷ οἱ ὀγδοάτῳ κακὸν ἦλυθε δῖος Ὀρέστης
Ἂψ ἀπ' Ἀθηνάων κατὰ δ' ἔκτανε πάλλοφονῆα
Αἴγισθον δολόμηtιν, ὃ οἱ πατέρα κλυτὸν ἔκτα,
Ἦτοι ὁ τὸν κτείνας δαινυτάφον Ἀργείοισιν
Μητρός τε συγερῆς καὶ ἀνάλκιδος Αἰγίσθοιο.

In the eighth year came godlike Orestes from Athens, and slew traiterous Ægisthus, his father's murderer; and after he had killed him, he prepared a supper for the funeral of his hated mother, and her effeminate consort, Ægisthus, to which he invited the Argians. Therefore, since Homer here commends Orestes for killing Ægisthus, but says nothing of killing his mother, Sophocles ought to have observed the same conduct.

ANTISYSTEMA.

Orest. Be not uneasy, we will do as thou wouldest have us.

Elect. Make haste then.

Orest. I am gone.

Elect. I will take care of what is to be done here.

[*Orestes, &c. retire in at the gates of the palace.*

Cho. It were very convenient that we speak a few mild words in this man's ear to deceive him, who, while he suspects no ill, falls into the punishment which the Goddess of Vengeance prepares for him.

ACT V. SCENE III.

Ægisthus, Electra, Chorus.

Ægisth. Which of you knows where are the Phocian strangers, who are come to inform us how Orestes was slain in a chariot-course? You I ask, you who have been always so fierce; for you take too great a part in this accident not to be well instructed.

Elect. I am instructed; why not? Should the knowledge escape me of the calamity of him who was most dear to me?

Ægisth. Where are the strangers; tell me?

Elect. Within with your queen, who entertains them kindly.

Ægisth. And have they declared that he is certainly dead? [*To Electra.*

Elect. They have not only assured us of it by their words, but have given us such proofs as leave us not the least room to doubt.

Ægisth. And can I go myself; and see those proofs.

Elect. Yes; you may go and feed your eyes with that horrid spectacle.

Ægisth. You have told me, not according to your usual custom, that which gives me much pleasure.

Elect. Go then and enjoy that pleasure, if you so delight in it.

Ægisth. I command all be silent, and that the palace-gates be opened for all the Mycenians and Argians to see, that if any of them there be who nourishes in his heart any vain hopes, he may quit them, seeing the corpse of Orestes, and receive our reins, lest he feel the terrible effects of my just wrath, should he dare to lift up his spirit against me.

Elect. My lord, I will do my duty, for time hath, at last, instructed me to obey my superiors.

ACT V. SCENE IV.

Ægisthus, Orestes, Pylades, Electra.

[*Clytemnestra, covered with a veil, which Ægisthus takes to be dead Orestes.*]

Ægisth. O Jove! what sight do I behold? Orestes dead before my eyes, whose death I wished for; but, if Nemesis will punish me, I say no more. Take off that covering which hides him from my eyes, that my kinsman may have his tribute of tears from me.

Orest. Lift it up yourself, it is not my business, but your's to see and utter your complaints for it.

Ægisth. Your admonition is just. I will obey, do thou call Clytemnestra to me if she be in the palace. [*To one of his Attendants.*

Orest. She is near you, look not elsewhere.

Ægisth. Woe is me! what do I behold? [*Uncovering the body.*

Orest. Doth she cause your fear? Do you know her?

Ægisth. In whose cursed snares am I fallen?

Orest. Did you not perceive, all this while, that alive you talked with the dead?

Ægisth. Woe is me! I understand what he hath said; doubtless this can be no other but Orestes who speaks to me.

Orest. Though [t] you are a great prophet, yet you have been mistaken.

Ægisth. I am undone, a wretch, but permit me to speak a little.

Elect. Permit him to speak no longer, brother, by the gods, nor amuse us by his vain discourses. For what is the advantage of a moment's delay to a man who is near his death? But kill him as quick as possible, and, when you have killed him, expose him to the birds and dogs, the only sepulchre which it is fit he should have; that is the only remedy of all my evils.

Orest. We are not at leisure to meddle with controversies, but must only consult of methods how to hasten thy death.

Ægisth. Why do you lead me into the palace? If that action be good, why needs it darkness, have you not courage to kill me here?

Orest. It is not for you to give your orders, but go in where you killed my father, that in the same chamber his murderer may die also.

Ægisth. Is it by all means necessary, that that chamber must see the present and the future miseries of the sons of Pelops?

Orest. It must see thy miseries, those are the predictions which I make concerning thee, and which nothing can falsify.

Ægisth. But you have not boasted your father's art.

[t] *You are a great prophet, yet.*] This is founded upon the reputation which Ægisthus had of being a prophet.

Orest. You contradict much, and the journey is retarded, but march.

Ægisth. Thou lead.

Orest. You must go before.

Ægisth. Is this because you fear I should escape you?

Orest. Not so, but I must take care lest you feel any comfort in your death, but that it be grievous to you. [u] There ought immediately to be such a punishment inflicted on all who will act contrary to the laws, to die sooner; then such flagitious crimes would be less frequent.

Cho. O race of Atreus! who after you had suffered an infinite number of evils for the sake of liberty, hast, with difficulty, at last obtained it by this present effect of your courage.

[u] *There ought immediately to be such a punishment inflicted.*] This piece cannot end better than by these words of Orestes, that this might appear an act of justice, and that the audience might not look upon him as an assassin or a parricide, but an executor of divine vengeance, and an instrument which God had made use of to punish so horrible a crime.

THE

TRAGEDY

OF

OEDIPUS TYRANNUS.

Dramatis Personae.

OEDIPUS, King of Thebes.
High Priest of Jupiter.
CREON, Brother to Jocasta.
TIRESIAS, a Prophet.
A Messenger from Corinth, an old Shepherd.
Another Shepherd, who had belonged to Laius.
Chorus of old Theban Priests and other ancient Thebans.
JOCASTA, Widow of Laius and Wife of Oedipus.

Mute Persons.

A Multitude of Theban Youths.
Oedipus's Children.

SCENE—Before Oedipus's Palace at Thebes.

OEDIPUS TYRANNUS.

THE ARGUMENT.—*This Tragedy of Oedipus had the title of Tyrannus, a tyrant, or king, added to it in the latter times, but for what reason, whether because it excels all his other pieces; or, because of the description it gives us of the miseries of that prince, or only to distinguish it from the other Oedipus, called Coloneus, it is not certain. The subject of it is as follows:—*

Laius, King of Thebes, having been warned by the oracle that his own son should murder him, marry his mother, and succeed him in his throne; to prevent these mischiefs, delivered his son, as soon as he was born, to one of his servants to be murdered; but the servant moved with compassion slew him not, but gave him to a shepherd of Polybus, king of Corinth, and the shepherd to the king. Polybus having no child of his own, received him graciously, as did his wife Merope, who brought him up as their own. Oedipus going to inquire of the oracle concerning his birth, in a place where three ways meet, chanced to meet and kill his father. Whereupon there ensued a dreadful pestilence, which wasted Thebes and all the neighbouring country, which was not to cease until any one should resolve the ænigma of Sphinx, which many tried to do in vain. At last, Oedipus resolved it; the people of Thebes therefore, as a reward of his service, gave him his own mother in marriage, whom, not knowing to be so, he accepted; but the truth being found out, he pulled out his own eyes, and his wife and mother hanged herself. This story, whether we consider the heinousness of the crimes that unhappy prince was guilty of, and at the same time how he committed them all merely out of ignorance, or those surprising incidents by which they were discovered, and the fatal consequences that discovery produced to his whole house, is confessedly the noblest subject that ever a tragedy was composed upon. But yet Aristotle observes one default in it, that it was not probable Oedipus should be so long married to Jocasta, and not know after what manner Laius was slain, nor inquire after the author of his murder. But as that subject could not subsist without it, Sophocles did not think fit to omit it, but placed it out of the action of the tragedy; and a poet is only answerable for those incidents which enter the composition of his fable, not those which go before, or follow after. Wherefore Aristotle lays it down as a rule, cap. xvi. *of his Poetics.*

" It is absolutely necessary, that among all the incidents which " compose the fable, no one be without reason; or if that be im- " possible, it ought to be so ordered, that that which is without " reason, be out of the tragedy; as Sophocles has prudently ob- " served in his Oedipus."

ACT I. SCENE I.

At the opening of the Scene there appears, in a Court before the Palace, an Altar raised to Oedipus, at which are prostrate a great Number of Theban Youths, the High Priest of Jupiter, with the other Priests of the several Temples, at Sacrifice. At a Distance are discovered the two Temples of Pallas, the Altar of Ismenus, with Crowds of People round them.

Oedipus comes out of the Palace to them.

Oed. [a] O children, young offspring of ancient Cadmus, why are you prostrate at these altars, adorned [b] with sacred boughs? The whole city

[a] *O children, young offspring of ancient Cadmus.*] The Thebans are so called, because Cadmus, the son of Agenor, being sent to seek his sister Europa, in his travels built Thebes; and afterwards Amphion, son of Jupiter and Antiope, with the sweetness of his lyre, caused the senseless stones to raise themselves into the walls which surrounded the city; but the truth is, that he civilized them with good laws and customs, who before were rude and uncivilized. Hence they are called in the Antigone, Κάδμε πάροικοι καὶ δόμων Ἀμφίονος.

[b] *With sacred boughs.*] The ancients when they went into their temples to pray, every one carried in his hand branches stuck in wool, and sometimes they were crowned with them; the boughs were olive when they prayed or sacrificed to Minerva, when to Apollo, laurel! wherefore Homer says of Chryses, Apollo's priest,

Στέμμαθ' ἔχων ἐν χερσὶν ἑκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος.

Of the same use was the ἱκλήριος θησαυρὸς mentioned in the Ajax, which consisted of locks of hair. The Jews had a festival in which they carried branches, as they did likewise on all occasions of public rejoicing; as you may read, 1 Maccab. xiii. 51. "And "entered into it the three-and-twentieth day of the second month, "in the hundred seventy and one year with thanksgiving, and "branches of palm trees, and with harps, and cymbals, and with "viols, and hymns and songs," &c. From them it passed to the Greeks, who celebrated the same festival and called it, ὀσχοφόρια, *oscophoria*, ἀπὸ τῦ φέρειν τὰς ὄσχας, *i. e.* from carrying boughs hung with grapes, which were termed ὄσχαι. The institution and manner of it are described at large by Plutarch, in the Life of Theseus.

is filled with smoke of sacrifices, likewise with prayers addressed to Apollo, mixed with lamentations. I sent no person to demand the cause of your affliction, but am come myself for that purpose, Oedipus a prince so famous through all the world. But thou, old man, speak first, since it is fit a man of your age should speak before these youths. Why are you prostrate here? Is it on the account of your present or fear of future sufferings? You shall find me always ready to assist you, for surely I were hard-hearted, if I did not lament the occasion of this concourse.

High Priest. O thou, who rulest our land! You see the age and the state of us who are prostrate at [c] your altars: some of whom are too young to go far hence, and some too old. These are the principal priests of all our temples; I am a priest of Jove; these a company of youths; another tribe sit crowned at the [d] two temples of Pallas, others at the prophetic altar [e] of Ismenus. The city, as thou

[c] *At your altars.*] *Gr.* βωμοῖσι, which the old Scholiast calls ναοῖσι, which contain the altar, for thus he describes the temples, Ναὸς and ἱερὸν, or the whole edifice, in which are contained Βωμὸς, the altar, on which they offered their oblations. 2. Πρόναος, the porch before the temple. 3. Τέμενος, where the image stood of the chief god. But with submission here was no temple, for the altar was raised in the middle of the court, that the action might be public and visible.

[d] *Two temples of, &c.*] Pallas had two temples in Thebes, one consecrated to Minerva, Ὄγκα, a Phœnician word, which signifies, grand, or, ἀλαλκομενὴς, *i. e.* the assister; the other to Minerva, Ἰσμήνια, and took its name from Ismenus, a river which ran through Thebes. But some say the former was not in Thebes, but in a neighbouring village. Æschylus in his seven captains against Thebes invokes her by the former name, ἐν μάχαισί τε μάναι, ῥαναὶ Ὄγκα.

[e] *Altar of Ismenus.*] *Gr.* Ἰσμενῷ τε μαντεία στοδῷ, the prophetic ashes of Ismenus; near the river Ismenus there was a temple sacred to Apollo, where the priests burnt sacrifices, and consulted the flames, and thence delivered prophesies.

seest thyself, as a tempest-beaten ship, is almost sunk, not able to withstand the fury of the raging waves. The earth is made barren of all her fruits, her flocks all perish, and mothers die with their infants. The most cruel pestilence with a devouring fire ravages the city, and deprives it of its inhabitants; and black Pluto grows rich by our mournings and lamentations. Wherefore neither I nor these young men present are prostrate at your altars, as if we judged you equal with the gods; but we address ourselves to you as to the first of men, and as to one who is alone able to ease us of those calamities which oppress us, and to reconcile us to the favour of the gods. It is you, who coming to this city freed us from the tribute which we paid to the cruel goddess, and on that sad occasion you received no succours but from the gods who inspired you; wherefore with justice we look upon you as our only deliverer. And now, O most powerful Oedipus, we all turn our eyes toward you, and do beseech you, find out some remedy against our evils, either by consulting the Gods, or joining in consultation with men; for I see that wise men often find certain succours in the greatest evils. Go now, thou best of men, raise up your ruined city, pity our sad state, as now this land calls you its saviour, by reason of our former deliverance, which we owe to you; for we shall by no means remember your former benefits, if, after you have saved our lives, you suffer us to perish miserably: but now preserve the city, as before you made fortune smile on your dejected people; now be like thyself, remember that [f] the number of subjects makes the grandeur of princes, and that without men, fortresses and ships are entirely useless.

[f] *The number of subjects, &c.*] Alcæus calls men πύργοι ἀρῆιοι, martial towers. And Demosthenes says, Ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλεις, καὶ ὁ τείχη, the men are the city, not the walls.

Oed. Miserable children, I am not ignorant of the important cause which brings you here, nor of what you wish for; for well I know those evils which afflict you. But your sufferings are nothing in comparison of mine, every one of you feels but his own evil, but my soul is every way oppressed with its own grief, with yours and all my people: think not your cries have awaked me from my sleep, but you know how many tears I've shed, and that my spirit hath long contended with a thousand different thoughts: in this sad agitation I have used that remedy which I thought most proper to hasten your deliverance; I have sent Creon, the son of Menœceus, my wife's brother, to the temple of Apollo, to inquire of that god the way to save this city. And when I consider the long time he hath been absent, I am surprised that he is not yet returned, nor can I comprehend the reason of his too long delay. But when he comes, then I should be the worst of men if I did not execute all that the god commands.

High Priest. My lord you speak of Creon in a proper time, for these children inform me that he is near.

Oed. I wish he comes with [g] as good luck as he appears pleasant in his countenance.

High Priest. He doth so, otherwise he would not come with his head crowned with laurel.

Oed. We shall soon know, for he is near enough for us to inquire the truth of him.

ACT I. SCENE II.

Oedipus, Creon, High Priest, other Priests, and Thebans.

Oed. O prince, my beloved kinsman, what answer do you bring us from the god?

[g] *As good luck.*] *Gr.* ἐν τύχῃ γέ τῳ. The particles τῳ and τῆ, with the Æolicks and Atticks, are common to both masculine and feminine genders; as, Κλύω τῆ σάλπιγγος, I hear a trumpet, τῆ χρείας, or what cause or necessity. VET. SCHOL.

Cre. A good answer, for I say that our misfortunes will end if the issue prove right.

Oed. What speech is that? It gives me neither ground to fear or hope.

Cre. If you will hear the will of God, in the presence of these, I am ready to speak it; otherwise I will follow you into the palace.

Oed. Speak before them all, for I am not so much in pain for myself as for my afflicted people.

Cre. I will speak what I heard of the god. Phœbus plainly commanded us to drive pollution out of this land, as being nourished in it, and not suffer in it one moment the monster which is the object of his wrath.

Oed. How doth he direct us to purge the land?

Cre. We must either drive to banishment the murderer of Laius, or make him expiate with his own blood, the blood which he hath shed. Since Laius's blood unrevenged afflicts the land.

Oed. Who is this whom the oracle hath thus declared to us hath shed blood?

Cre. Laius, my lord, was governor of this land before you ruled it.

Oed. I know it, but I never saw him.

Cre. It is his death the oracle commands us to revenge, by punishing his murderers.

Oed. But in what part of the earth are they, and where will that unsearchable footstep be found out, to trace the author of a crime committed so long ago?

Cre. He said here in Thebes; for that which we seek may be found, but that which is neglected, easily escapes.

Oed. Whether did Laius happen to meet this death, at home, or in the field, or in another land?

Cre. As he travelled out to consult the oracle, and never returned home since that moment.

Oed. Did no messenger or guide, who went with

him in the way return, of whom we may inquire and know the truth?

Cre. They are all dead, one excepted, who fled away for fear, who could tell but one thing of all that passed.

Oed. What was that? For the smallest light that one can discern often sufficeth to make an entire discovery.

Cre. He said a company of thieves killed him, and that he fell oppressed by numbers.

Oed. What thief durst venture to commit so great a crime, had he not been encouraged by the promise of some great reward?

Cre. It was supposed they lay in ambush for him; when this prince died, we found no succour in our evils.

Oed. What so great evil then hindered you from making search for the murderers of your king?

Cre. Sphinx forced us to think only of our present evil, and neglect those whose author was more uncertain.

Oed. But I will lay all open from the beginning, it is with justice that Apollo ordered us by your mouth to revenge this murder; wherefore [h] you shall find me your assistant. I will expiate this land, and justify the oracle of the god: and herein it is not for any of my relations, but for myself I labour; I de-

[h] *You shall find me your assistant, &c.*] Observe how nicely Sophocles manages the character of Oedipus, so as to make him appear what a tragedian ought to chuse as a proper subject of his tragedy, that is, neither bad nor good in the superlative degree. For, as he is here represented as a good prince, and one who omitted nothing that could any way conduce to the good of his people, yet hath he in several instances shewed himself to be imprudent, violent, and proud. Yet were not those crimes properly the cause of his misfortunes, but his rashness and curiosity; for Creon tells him hereafter: such tempers as yours are insupportable to themselves. And these are the vices which Sophocles would have us correct.

fend myself from the violence of an assassin: for whosoever it was that killed Laius, would imbrue likewise his hands in my blood: so that while I labour for his vengeance, at the same time I provide for my own security. Wherefore quickly, children, rise from these seats, taking in your hands those sacred boughs, let another gather the people of Thebes together here; while I try all methods. This discovery which the god hath made us will either end our lives or our evils.

High Priest. O children, let us rise, since we only come to demand what the king hath executed, and may Phœbus, who gave those oracles, be our saviour and healer of all our evils.

[[i] *Exeunt all but the Priests who compose the Chorus.*

[i] *Exeunt all but the priests who compose the Chorus.*] The old Scholiast hath mistaken the persons of whom the Chorus of this tragedy consists, for he tells us that ἔξεισιν ὁ ἱερεὺς πράξας δὶ ὅπερ ἦλθεν· ἅμα δὲ καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆ χώραν εἶναι ἑτέρῳ ὑποκρίνῃ, and a little after, κατὰ τὸν προσαξιν τῆ βασιλέως πάρεισι πρεσβυται τινὲς, ἐξ ὧν ὁ χορὸς συμπληρῶται. The high priest goes out, having done that which he came to do, and likewise to make room for another actor—according to the king's command come in certain ancient men, of whom the Chorus is composed. But he seems to be sufficiently confuted by the learned Mr. Dacier, for how is it possible that ancient men who arrived on the theatre but the moment that the high priest and youths who accompanied him departed, should know the oracle which Creon brought from Apollo, and so make reflections so suitable to it as they do in the following song? It is most reasonable, therefore, that the Chorus should consist of such persons as had taken possession of the theatre from the beginning of the action. The words of Sophocles are sufficient to confute this error, for he tells us the age and the state of those who are assembled at the altar, viz. himself at the head of a select number of Theban youths, and the other priests of the several temples; he retires after he had performed what belonged to his office, and the youths along with him, it being neither suitable to the dignity of the high priest nor the capacity of the youths to be of the Chorus. It remains, therefore, that the other priests who were present from the beginning of the action had heard the oracle, and what else passed between Oedipus and Creon, in order to a discovery of the murderers, must compose the Chorus, until they are joined by others of the principal citizens.

ACT I. SCENE III.

Chorus.

Cho. O divine oracle which came from the rich Pythian temple to famous Thebes, my spirits are seized with astonishment and fear. O Delian king, Healer, I worship thy divinity. Tell me, divine oracle, what effects of thy beneficence shall we receive now, or in process of time? daughter of golden hope. You, O immortal Minerva, daughter of Jove, first I invoke; and Diana, governess of the earth, which hath a famous throne in this city, and thou Apollo, the Darter, I invoke likewise; you three repellers of evil be favourable, since you expelled the evil which as a raging fire consumed our city, come still to my assistance, O ye gods, I bear numberless evils. All the people are feeble and languishing, and our oppressed spirits cannot furnish us with the least succour; nor can the fruits of the earth arrive to their maturity, neither are the women able to bear the throes of child-birth. You may see one fall dead upon another, who swifter than a well-winged fowl or lightning, roll themselves toward the shore of the infernal god, so that the city is daily more and more deserted. An infinite number of miserable abortives lie dead unlamented on the ground; mothers and grandmothers oppressed with evils assembled from all parts, prostrate themselves at these altars, which they regard as a secure port, and demand of the gods an end of these evils. The prayers which they address to Apollo are mixed with cries and lamentations. Wherefore, O thou beauteous daughter of Jove, espouse our cause, and expel this wicked Mars out of this country, either into the vast bed of Amphitrite, or into the Euxine sea, which dashes against the Thracian rocks. What the night leaves unperformed the day accomplishes. O Jupiter,

who rulest the powers of the purple lightnings, consume him with your lightning. O! Lycian king, send your invincible arrows from your golden bow for our assistance: and thou Diana, enlighten us with thy purple rays wherewith thou passest over the Lycian mountains. Thee I invoke also, adorned with a golden mitre, drinking Bacchus, companion of the Mœnades, to come to our help, burning with your bright torch this most inglorious of all the gods.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Oedipus, Chorus, Attendants.

Oed. [k] You ask, but if you would obtain your request, you must listen unto my words, and assist yourselves by obeying my decree, and you may obtain a remedy against your evils. Mine, who heretofore never thought of speaking of this murder, nor could I be suspected of having any share in it. I would not have enterprized to search the author of this crime, unless I had some certain signs how to discover him: but now, since I am of the number of the citizens, I decree to all you Thebans, that who-

[k] *You ask, but if you would obtain your request.*] Oedipus being resolved to use all means in his power to discover the murderer of Laius, first encourageth all his subjects to assist him, by telling them, that as he was the cause of the pestilence, if he were discovered and expelled, that would cease. Wherefore he lays his strict commands, that whoever knew where he was, should instantly discover him, and promises the discoverer both a reward and thanks for his service. And to encourage the murderer to discover himself, he says he shall suffer nothing but banishment out of the city, a small punishment for so great a crime, and only equal with that which the Romans called *minor capitis diminutio*, which is as Paul. Jurisc. expresseth it, *cum amittimus civitatem, et libertatem retinemus.* But if nothing will prevail upon them to discover him, he lays the utmost curse upon him, viz. that he should be driven from all things common.

soever of you knows him who slew Laius, the son of Labdacus, that he discover him to me. But if he who committed the crime fears to come and accuse himself, I shall free him from that fear, he shall suffer no other punishment but exile. But if any one knew any other his murderer, of any other land, let him not be silent, for I will give him thanks, and a reward proportionable to so great a service. But if you will still be silent, and any one out of fear for his friend or himself holds his peace, then hear what I shall do. I forbid that man, whosoever he is, to be received into this land, whose government I possess, to speak to any body, or to be made a communicant of the prayers and sacrifices of the gods, or to [1] partake of the holy water: but I command that all should chase him from their houses, and pursue him as the miscreant who pollutes this land, as the Pythian oracle of the god has manifestly declared to me. And so I will accomplish the will of the god, and revenge the dead, and I curse him that did it, whether he being one conceals himself, or if he had his accomplices, to drag a miserable life. And I beseech the gods, that I may suffer the sad effects of those imprecations, if the murderer be in my palace and I am conscious to it. And I beseech you all to execute all those decrees, both for your love of me, and the respect which you owe to the god, and for the compassion which you are obliged to have for your country, which is so barren, and so miserably destroyed. For if the gods did not positively demand vengeance, yet were it not convenient for you to see this murderer pass unpunished, and not to

[1] *Partake of the holy water.*] The ancients had a custom, that before they went to sacrifice, all those who partook thereof should wash their hands, and the water in which they washed was called χέρνιψ, and with this water likewise they were afterwards sprinkled by the priests; on both which accounts the poets use χερνίπλεσθαι instead of ἱερὰ ῥέζειν, to offer sacrifice.

pursue the murderer of so great a man, and your king. At present I possess the throne of which he was seized; the queen his spouse hath raised me to her bed, and chosen me for her husband, and his children likewise would have been mine if he had had any. But since the powers denied him those blessings, now that misfortune hath oppressed him, I will supply their place and labour for him as for my own father. I will try every method to find out the author of the murder of this descendant of ancient Agenor. And to those which do not obey my orders, I pray to the gods that the land may refuse her fruits, and that their wives may die without children, and that themselves may die such a death or a worse than threatens them. But to us, who with all our hearts consent to what I have said, may justice be an assistant, and may the eternal gods favour us with their protection.

Cho. My lord, as you have bound me by a curse to discover the murderer, I declare I neither killed him, nor do I know who killed him: but to resolve that question belongs to him that sent the oracle.

Oed. You have spoke right, but [m] no man can force the gods to speak what they will not.

Cho. I have still a second advice to give you.

Oed. And if you have after that a third, do not omit to speak it.

Cho. [n] King Tiresias hath the same knowledge

[m] *No man can force the gods.*] Oedipus makes this answer to the Chorus, to prevent the fiction of their sending again to the oracle, lest it should cause too long a delay in the drama, which to the audience would taste but insipid: nor was it necessary, for it is plain that the same oracle which declared the cause of the pestilence, did likewise point out the murderer, though Creon, for fear of the king's displeasure, would not discover it.

[n] *King Tiresias.*] The Chorus calls him king, because of his prophetic spirit, not for any civil power which he possessed. It may not be improper to insert here a passage out of Dr. Potter's Archæol. Græc. which fully justifies the Chorus in giving Tiresias

with Apollo in this affair; and by consulting him you may discover what you search for.

Oed. Nor was I negligent in that affair; but, by the advice of Creon, I sent two messengers for him, and it is a wonder why he is absent so long.

Cho. There are other reports concerning his death, but they are frivolous and vain.

Oed. What are they? For I weigh every thing I hear.

Cho. He is said to have been slain by some travellers.

Oed. And I too heard that, but can find none who can say he saw the murder committed.

Cho. But though he be a little fearful of the discovery, he will not attend the effect of your imprecations.

Oed. Who does not fear to act the crime, will not fear the imprecations.

Cho. But he who discovers him is come, for they

this title. "It has been the custom of all nations to pay a peculiar honour to their priests; which was partly done out of respect to the gods, whom they represented, and partly because they did not pray for a blessing on themselves, their own families, and friends only, but on whole communities, on the whole state of mankind. They were accounted mediators between gods and men, being obliged to offer the sacrifices and prayers of the people to their gods—and on the other side ἑρμηνεῦαι παρὰ θεῶν ἀνθρώποις, deputed by the gods to be their interpreters to men, to instruct them how to pray for themselves, what it was most expedient to ask, what sacrifices, what vows, what gifts, would be most acceptable to the gods; and, in short, to teach them all the ceremonies used in divine worship.—On this account the priests were honoured with the next place to their kings and chief magistrates; and in many places wore the same habits. These were often consecrated to the priesthood. Thus Anius, in Virgil, was king of Delos, and priest of Apollo.

"*Rex Anius, Rex idem hominum Phœbique sacerdos.*"

The same author proves by a passage in Plutarch, that ἀνδρῶν ἦν τὸ τῆς ἱερωσύνης ἀξίωμα πρὸς τὸ τῆς βασιλείας, the dignity of priests was equal to that of kings.

bring hither a divine prophet, who alone of all men speaks nothing but the truth.

ACT II. SCENE II.

Oedipus, Tiresias, Chorus, &c.

Oed. Wise Tiresias, who knowest all things which can be known, who knowest the secrets of the heavens and of the earth's dark womb; though you are deprived of the day's light, yet you cannot fail of knowing the evils in which this city is plunged, of which, O king, we regard thee the only saviour and helper. If our messengers have not already informed thee, Phœbus has sent word to us that our freedom from this disease would only be obtained by searching diligently the murderers of Laius, and either putting them to death, or expelling them out of the kingdom. But thou conceal not from us the truth, but consult the voice of birds, make use of all ways of divination, deliver thyself and the city, deliver me, instruct us how to appease the blood which cries against us; we rely on thee, and remember that to succour the miserable is the noblest of labours.

Tir. ° Alas! alas! How often doth knowledge make us unhappy? For what I know now undoes me: I should not have come hither.

Oed. What is the reason that you come hither in such amazement?

° *Alas! alas! How often, &c.*] Triclinius says, that Tiresias begins with this sad exclamation, as fearing some mischief from Oedipus, if he should discover him to be the cause of the pestilence, but this doth not agree with what he says afterwards.—

ὐ γάρ με μοῖρα πρὸς γέ σʼ πεσεῖν
It is not my fate to die by thee; *and*
ἄπειμ' ὐ τὸ σὸν δείσας πρόσωπον.
I go hence, not fearing your face.

Tir. Dismiss me hence; your evils and mine likewise will be more supportable if you will follow my counsel.

Oed. What you say is unjust, and in refusing to answer us, you refuse to succour this city which brought you up.

Tir. I see that your demand will plunge you into the worst of evils, therefore force me not to speak.

Cho. Nay, by the gods, do not return so; since we all, as suppliants, adore you.

Tir. Yes; but you do not all understand what you do; but I by no means will discover the evils which environ you, as I shall do if I speak what I know.

Oed. What say you? Though you know the truth, will you conceal it? Can you betray us, and suffer your country entirely to be destroyed?

Tir. It is for your sake no less than my own that I am silent. Why do you rashly accuse me? If I should speak, you would not listen to me.

Oed. Thou worst of fellows, thou wouldest enrage the hardest rocks; wilt thou tell us nothing? Art thou so inexorable and morose in thy anger?

Tir. You have upbraided me with my anger, but consider not your own, therefore you insult me.

Oed. Who would not be angry to hear these words, and to see how dishonourably you treat your country?

Tir. The evils which I see will come to pass of themselves, though I conceal them.

Oed. Therefore you ought to tell me what will come to pass.

Tir. I will not speak any farther, be you transported with never so fierce anger.

Oed. Therefore, thus enraged as I am, I can neither regard measures, nor dissemble any thing. It appears to me that you were an accomplice in this crime, though your hands be free from the very

fact; but, if you had your eyes, I should accuse you as the only author of it.

Tir. True, but I declare that you are obnoxious to those imprecations which you have pronounced; and that, from this present day, you are neither permitted to speak to me nor your subjects, but that we ought all to look upon you as the monster which draws down upon this land the wrath of heaven.

Oed. With what impudence darest thou invent this falsehood? do you think to escape my resentment?

Tir. I do; for truth is stronger than injustice.

Oed. Who discovered this truth? not your art.

Tir. You did, for you forced me unwillingly to speak.

Oed. What? speak again that I may understand you better.

Tir. Do you not understand yet? or do you tempt me to speak?

Oed. It is not to tempt you. But speak again.

Tir. I say that you are the murderer of this man whose murderer you seek.

Oed. Do you glory in the affront you put upon me, and again repeat it?

Tir. And what if I should speak all that I know? How much more then would you be enraged?

Oed. Say as much as you please, it will be all said in vain.

Tir. I say that you, unknown to yourself, do converse criminally with your nearest relation, and see not into what an abyss of misery you are plunged.

Oed. And dost thou think that I will always bear this, and suffer thee to triumph?

Tir. Yes; for truth hath ever the greatest power.

Oed. It hath; but truth is not in thee, since thou art no less blind in the eyes of thy mind than in the eyes of thy body.

Tir. But thou art a wretch to upbraid me with these things, with which there is none of these present who will not upbraid thee soon.

Oed. Thy life is only preserved by thy darkness in which thou art plunged, and but for that, this is the last time that ever any should behold thee.

Tir. It is not my fate to fall by you, for Apollo is my safeguard.

Oed. Are these Creon's inventions or your's?

Tir. Creon has done you no injury, but you alone have injured yourself.

Oed. O wealth and power, and art excelling all arts, how dost thou expose us to envy? Since, for the sake of this crown, which the people, with one consent, have placed upon my head, Creon, my once faithful friend, hath laid a snare for me, and stirred up against me that old enchanter, that impostor who is clear-sighted only in his interest, but is blind in his art. Wherefore, say how is it possible that you should be a true prophet? When that horrid monster, Sphinx, destroyed the land, why did you not find out some way to deliver it? And to explain that enigma was not for any ordinary person, but there needed a prophetic spirit which you have not, and which the gods never gave thee; but I, [p] Oedipus, an ignorant person, came and explained the enigma with my ingenuity; nor did I find it out by consulting birds. I did it, whom you attempt to banish, thinking to be Creon's principal favourite; but this plot may fall upon your own head and his who was the author of it: and, had I not some reverence for your age, I would make

[p] *I, Oedipus, an ignorant person.*] This Oedipus says of himself, through modesty; whereas, indeed, his wit, which he discovered in solving the enigma of Sphinx, grew into a proverb, as we find by the words of Davus, in Terence:—

Davus sum, non Oedipus.

thee by sad experience know the effects of your wicked designs.

Cho. Both the words of Tiresias, and those of Oedipus, seem to us who have considered them with cooler reason, to be only spoke in anger. This is no proper time to speak our private resentments, but to consider how we may best solve the oracle of the god.

Tir. Though you are king, it is but just that I answer you with the same freedom which you use in speaking to me. I am not your subject, but Apollo's, neither will I employ Creon to protect me; but (I say) since you have reproached me as blind, you yourself see, but see not in what evils you are plunged, neither where you live, nor with whom you dwell. But do you know of whom you are born? And do you not know that you are an enemy to your nearest relations, both those who are dead, and those on the earth? The bitter curses on both sides, which you derive from your father and your mother, drive you out of the earth, who though you see now, hereafter you will be plunged in darkness; and in what place will not you make your cries be heard? What mountain will not echo your complaints? when you perceive what an unhappy marriage you have sailed into, after a prosperous voyage. You know not yet of all your evils, which will put you in the number of your children; and now reproach Creon and me as much as you please for this freedom; but no more criminal wretch than thyself will ever meet his deserved fate.

Oed. Must I then hear this speech from him? Begone to perdition quickly; begone from our palace, away.

Tir. I would not have come if you had not called me.

Oed. I did not know you would talk such foolish

things, otherwise I would not have called you hither in such haste.

Tir. You accuse me of folly, but your father thought me wise. [*going.*

Oed. Who! stay. Who was my father?

Tir. This same day will give you both your birth and your death.

Oed. How mysterious and dark are all your words!

Tir. Therefore you are the properest to explain them.

Oed. You reproach me with a thing which made all my grandeur.

Tir. It is that grandeur which has ruined you.

Oed. But, if I have preserved the city, my own safety is of small importance to me.

Tir. I go hence; and thou, boy, lead me.

Oed. Let him lead you away; your presence is here but importunate, and you only trouble us; when you are gone we shall be easy.

Tir. I go away, since I have said those things on the account of which I came hither; nor do I fear your face, for it is not in your power to kill me. I tell thee, then, that this man whom a while ago thou didst pursue with threats and decrees, as the murderer of Laius, is here. He passes for a stranger, but he will soon appear to be a home-born Theban; nor will his fortune give him much delight, for, blind and poor, he will be a wanderer in a strange land. [*Shewing his sceptre, the ensign of his royal dignity.*] He will appear to be a brother and father to his children, a son and husband of her of whom he was born, his father's son and murderer. Now retire into your palace, and there think on what I have said; and if that you shall find me to have spoken false, then you may say that I am no prophet.

ACT II. SCENE III.

Chorus, STROPHE I.

¶ Who is he whom the prophesying Delphic rock accused to have committed murder, the worst of crimes, with his bloody hands? Whosoever he is, it is time for him with the swiftest racer's speed to take his flight, for the son of Jupiter, armed with fire and lightning, is prepared to assail him. And the cruel inevitable fates pursue him.

ANTISTROPHE I.

For the oracle of snowy Parnassus declared that every one should search this man who hides himself. The wretch traverses the forests, searches out the dens and crevices of the rocks, he wanders alone in the fields as a bull, to evade the effect of the oracles

¶ *Who is he whom the prophesying, &c.*] The Chorus, being willing to favour Oedipus, nor yet presuming to accuse Tiresias of falsehood, speaks in a doubtful manner, wondering of whom Apollo should speak; and because Parnassus, a very steep rocky mountain, was near Delphi, and thereon Apollo's oracle, therefore he calls it the Delphic rock.

It was supposed to be in the very middle of the earth, for which reason the oracles are a little after called, τὰ μεσόμφαλα γᾶς μαντεῖα. And the city of Delphi, near which this oracle stands, is called *Orbis Umbilicus*. Hear *Alex. ab Alex.* on this subject, lib. vi. cap. 2. *Delphi orbis umbilicus commune omnium oraculum in alto Parnasso, urbs non mœnibus, sed abruptis rupibus munita, arduo ac difficili ascensu. Templum Apollinis cultu, et religione longe celebratissimum intra urbem non manu extructa, sed nativa præcipitia munivere.* The reason of Delphi being called the navel of the earth, is founded upon a fable, that Jupiter once, having let fly two eagles, one from the east and another from the west, they met each other just at Delphi; in memory whereof they consecrated in the temple two eagles, and a navel upon which they stood, made of white stone, with a riband hanging from it instead of a navel-string. Strabo assures us that this is in the very middle of Greece, which, perhaps, might occasion the fable.

delivered from the middle of the earth, but they are immortal and inevitable.

STROPHE II.

The wise prophet comes to disturb us with dismal explications, neither to be denied nor yet rejected. What shall I say ? I am perplexed with doubts, from hope to fear alternately I am tossed, nor do I see what can determine me, for I never heard that there was any difference between the son of Labdacus and the son of Polybus ; therefore, why should I, by violent conjectures, make the sense of the oracle fall upon Oedipus, and revenge upon him a murder of which we know not the author ?

ANTISTROPHE II.

Yet, Jupiter and Apollo are wise, and know all the actions of men ; but that a prophet has more knowledge from the gods than another, it is not certainly determined ; one man may excel another in prudence, yet they may all be deceived ; but, before I see a certain oracle, I will not accuse Oedipus. This is certain, that a horrid monster ravaged this land, and we then were witnesses of his wisdom, for which the city was well disposed towards him, and, therefore, they shall never charge this crime on him by my consent.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Creon, Chorus, Attendants.

Cre. Thebans, I came to you, for I could not support the terrible news which I heard, that king Oedipus accuses me of the blackest of treasons. If, in a time so calamitous as this, he thinks I have conspired against him, or went about to defame him, I desire not a longer life, for an accusation of so bad a nature will bring the greatest of scandals upon me,

for it will make me pass for a wicked man among the citizens, among you, and all my friends.

Cho. It was only his violent anger that suggested to him that suspicion, it was not the real persuasion of his mind.

Cre. Whose assertion was it that the prophet, persuaded by my counsel, spreads false reports of him?

Cho. It was said; but I know not upon what design.

Cre. [r] Did my accuser speak with a bold presence and sound mind?

Cho. I do not know, for the actions of princes are above my reach; but, see, himself comes out of the palace.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Oedipus, Chorus, Creon.

Oed. Here, you; how came you hither? Or have you the impudence to come into my palace, who art certainly the murderer of Laius; who hast certainly conspired against me to rob me of my crown? Speak, by the gods, did you observe any cowardice or folly in me, that you dare to enterprise so hardy an attempt? Or, did you think that I should not at last discover your conspiracy, and that I would not prevent it? But, is it not the greatest folly to aspire to the throne without the favour of the people and friends, which is always obtained by their favour and abundance of wealth?

[r] *Did my accuser speak with a bold presence, &c.*] *i.e.* Was he in his senses; as a person in his senses hath a sound mind and stedfast eye, so one besides himself hath a distracted mind and wandering eye.

Cre. But, how did I do it? [*] Let me speak in my turn. When you have heard, then judge me yourself.

Oed. You are very eloquent, but I do not think fit to hear you: it is enough I have found you my grievous enemy.

Cre. But, pray hear first what defence I shall make.

Oed. Do not tell me that you are not a perfidious man.

Cre. If you think that blind obstinacy is of any advantage to you, you are mistaken.

Oed. If you think to conspire against your kinsman, and not suffer a punishment equal to your crime, you are mistaken.

Cre. I agree with you; but inform me what injury you have suffered from me.

Oed. Did you not persuade me to send to that venerable prophet?

Cre. I did; and still you give the same counsel.

Oed. How long time since Laius——

Cre. Was what? For I do not understand you.

Oed. Was assassinated and slain.

Cre. A great many years ago; which cannot easily be reckoned.

Oed. Was then this prophet conversant in this art?

Cre. His wisdom then was, as his honour, great.

Oed. Did he never make mention of me in those times?

Cre. Never; in my presence.

[*] *Let me speak in my turn.*] The character which Sophocles gives Creon is directly opposite to that of Oedipus; for, as the latter is represented precipitate and violent in his accusation, so the other is wise and moderate, while by arguments drawn *ex improbabili*, and, at last, by a solemn oath, he endeavours to acquit himself of the suspicion of having acted falsely for his own interest.

Oed. But was no search made for the murderer?

Cre. There was; but we never heard of him.

Oed. Why, therefore, then, did not this wise prophet say what he doth to-day?

Cre. I do not know; as to things which I understand not, I love to hold my peace.

Oed. But you know what concerns yourself, and would do well to speak it.

Cre. Speak what? I will never deny what I know.

Oed. Unless the prophet had conspired with you, he had never accused me with the murder of Laius.

Cre. Whether he accused you or not, yourself knows it, for I want to learn of you the same things which you would learn of me.

Oed. Demand whatsoever you will of me, I shall never be proved the murderer.

Cre. Have you not married my sister?

Oed. I cannot deny what you say.

Cre. And is it not as true that you divide with her the supreme power?

Oed. She hath an absolute power over me, and I grant her whatsoever her wish can form.

Cre. And is it not true, that, after you both, I possess the highest honours?

Oed. It is that which makes thy treachery still more conspicuous.

Cre. You would change your sentiments, if you would give me liberty to speak. Consider, is there any man in the world who would rather be a king, with all those fears and terrors which accompany a kingdom than to live in the bosom of rest, with all the surety of the condition of a person which, by another name, possesseth the same power? For me, it is not the name of a king which I am ambitious of, but to do the actions, and that ought to be the ambition of every wise man. Now, without being exposed to the least danger, I receive of you all those graces which my wish can form, and if I were

a king myself, I should be obliged to do many things against my will. How then should a kingdom be more desirable to me than an unenvied power? I am not so imprudent as to prefer the dangerous grandeur of a king to an estate that is more safe and advantageous. Now I please all the world; all the world make court to me, and they who would approach your throne first address themselves to me; it is through my hands all the graces pass which you grant; why then should I slight all these advantages, and desire to obtain a kingdom? One who is so prudent as to consider this, could not be so unwise; and I not only never would have had those thoughts, but I never would have suffered it in any other; and, for a confirmation of the truth of what I have said, go to the Pythian oracle, and inquire if I have not faithfully declared to you all which it answered me; and if you shall find that I have formed any design in conjunction with the prophet, you shall not kill me by one single vote, but mine shall likewise follow yours; but, pray do not privately condemn me for a blind suspicion, for, if it is not just rashly to take bad men for good, it is still less so to take good men for bad; for I tell you that to deprive one's self of a good friend is to cast away one's own life, which is most dear to us. But, in time you will know all these things more plainly, since time only proves who is a just man, and you may know a wicked man in one day.

Cho. My lord, he hath spoke to you very wisely, though your care were never so just to prevent your ruin; for those who judge with too much haste never judge with certainty.

Oed. When any privately lies in ambush against me, I ought to be cautious to avoid his snares; if, at such a time, I suffer sloth to creep upon me, he will accomplish his wicked enterprise, and I shall not be able to defend myself.

Cre. What therefore would you do; send me out of the land?

Oed. No; but you shall die.

Cre. But you must first shew what is my crime.

Oed. You talk as if you would not submit to me.

Cre. Because you act unjustly.

Oed. I act for my own security.

Cre. So ought I likewise to act for mine.

Oed. But you are a wicked man.

Cre. But what if these are the dictates of blind passion?

Oed. Yet even then I may use my power.

Cre. No; unless you use it lawfully.

Oed. O city! city!

Cre. The city is for my interest, not yours only.

Cho. Cease, ye princes; Jocasta comes out of the palace in a fit juncture to determine this strife.

ACT III. SCENE III.

Jocasta, Creon, Oedipus, Chorus.

Jo. Miserable princes, why have you engaged yourselves in this unseasonable contest? Are you not ashamed, while the kingdom is on the very brink of ruin, to quarrel about your private resentments? Go into the palace, and you, Creon, retire to yours, and make not light misfortunes greater.

Cre. Madam, Oedipus, your husband, treats me with the greatest injustice, threatening either to drive me to banishment or to put me to a shameful death.

Oed. I own it, madam, for I have discovered a conspiracy which he had formed against me.

Cre. May the worst of evils fall upon me, and I pray to the gods that I may feel the effects of the most bitter imprecations, if I am guilty of those crimes with which he accuses me.

Jo. O, by the gods, Oedipus believe him, have respect for the oath by which he is bound. Then have some regard for me likewise, and for all these who are present.

Cho. I conjure you, my lord, listen to the queen's intreaties.

Oed. What would you have me do? Submit to him?

Cho. Believe a prince that was neither reckoned disobedient before, and who now hath made himself liable to the most horrible imprecations.

Oed. Do you know well what you demand of me?

Cho. I know.

Oed. What is it then? Speak.

Cho. That you would not ignominiously reject your friend upon a dark suspicion.

Oed. But consider, that while you make that demand, you seek my death or banishment.

Cho. I call the sun, the first of all the gods, to be my witness, that I wish without God, without friends, I may die the worst of deaths, if I have any such thought. But my soul is overwhelmed in sadness to see my country miserably perish, and I cannot bear that those evils in which it is plunged, be still aggravated by dissensions.

Oed. Let him, therefore, go, and if I must die, or dishonourably be expelled out of this land, it is for your sake, whom I respect, I grant him this grace, not for his; for he, wheresoever he is, will be the object of my aversion.

Cre. It is plain you are hard to be prevailed on to grant me pardon; but when your passion is over, then you will be full of grief; and such tempers are always most uneasy to themselves.

Oed. Will you not be gone out of my presence and let me alone?

Cre. I will go; you never knew me; but these still continue my friends.

Cho. Madam, why do you delay to take him into the palace?

Joc. When I shall know the cause of this disorder, I will.

Cho. They had words about a very uncertain rumour, and often taunted each other for an unjust suspicion.

Joc. Of one against the other?

Cho. Even so.

Joc. What were the words?

Cho. While the land is thus afflicted we ought to cease where they did.

Oed. You see that with all your wisdom you betray my interest, and fill my mind with sadness.

Cho. My lord, I often said, and still I say, that I must be very unwise and rash, if I were capable to abandon you; who came and rescued my dear country from numberless calamities, and now, if you can, let your princely wisdom again preserve us.

Joc. By the gods tell me why you are so transported with anger.

Oed. I'll tell you, madam, for I respect you above all others in the world. It is on account of a conspiracy which Creon had formed against me.

Joc. Declare his crime, if you accuse him upon sure grounds.

Oed. He says that I am the murderer of Laius.

Joc. Doth he speak it from his own knowledge? Or did he hear it of any other?

Oed. He hath suborned this wicked prophet, with whom he spreads those reports, which coming from him will pass for truths, and all the people will speak freely against me.

Joc. Now, my lord, pass by what hath been said concerning yourself, and hear me, and learn that there is none skilful in the prophetic art. I will give you some certain proofs of it. Formerly the oracle declared to Laius, (I say not that oracle was de-

livered by [t] Apollo himself, but by one of his priests,) that it was his fate to die by his child, which should be born of him and me, yet it was the general report some foreign thieves murdered him in a place [u] where three ways meet. Having begot the child, there passed not three days before he bound his feet together, and delivered him to his servant to be exposed on an inaccessible mountain. And there you see that Apollo neither brought it to pass that he should be his father's murderer; but that the fears of Laius to die by his son were all groundless. Yet these were the predictions of the oracle. Wherefore do not make yourself uneasy, for God himself will easily discover those things which he finds do need discovery.

Oed. My Jocasta, how hath thy words plunged me into sad grief, and raised a tumult in my spirit?

Joc. Whence ariseth this tumult in your breast, my lord?

Oed. I thought I heard you say, that Laius was slain in a place where three ways meet.

Joc. This was the report then, nor as yet doth it cease.

Oed. And where is the place where that misfortune befel him?

Joc. The country is called Phocis, where the way which leads from Delphi meets with that which leads from Daulia.

Oed. And at what time did this action happen?

[t] *Apollo himself.*] Jocasta would not directly charge the falsehood upon Apollo, but on his priests, who she thinks might have been corrupted.

[u] *Where three ways meet.*] Æschylus, in his Oedipus, mentions the same place where Laius was killed, for he supposeth the shepherd to say,

ἐπήειμεν τῆς ὁδῦ τροχήλατον
Σχιστῆς κελεύθου τρίοδον, ἔνθα συμβολὰς
Τριῶν κέλευθον πολνιάδων ἡμείβομεν.

Joc. A little before you ascended the throne of this realm this was publicly reported in the city.

Oed. Great Jove! What have you resolved to do with me?

Joc. What thought is this you revolve in your mind?

Oed. Do not question me, but tell me what was Laius's stature, and what his age?

Joc. He was large, his hair began to grow white, and his shape, my lord, differed not much from yours.

Oed. Woe is me, a wretch; I have made myself liable to the sadest imprecations, while I knew it not.

Joc. How say you, my lord? I cannot behold you without horror.

Oed. I very much fear lest the prophet be too clear sighted; but you will make a further discovery if you can tell me one thing yet.

Joc. Though I am seized with some horror, yet what you ask, if I am able, I will tell you.

Oed. Did Laius take this journey with a small train, or had he a numerous retinue, as kings usually have?

Joc. They [x] were, in all, five, a herald was comprised in the same number, and Laius had but one chariot.

Oed. Alas! alas! my misfortune is now too plain. Who was it who brought you this news?

Joc. A certain domestic who returned; the only one who preserved his life.

[x] *Were in all five.*] Seneca hath been guilty of an error in departing from the plainness of the ancient manners, and too strictly adhering to those of his own time. For he supposeth it absurd that a king should go out with so small a number, and therefore that a great part of Laius's retinue missed their road, and that only a small number remained with him.

Oed. *Frequensne turba regium cinxit latus?*
Joc. *Plures fefellit error ancipitis viæ,*
Paucos fidelis curribus junxit labor.

Ingenious contrivance! to suppose a great number to lose their way, in a road as plain as from London to Windsor. *Dacier.*

Oed. Is he now in the palace?

Joc. No, for, from the time he came from thence, and saw you possessing the empire, and Laius slain, he beseeched me to send him into the fields to overlook my flocks, that he might not have the grief to live in the city. I granted him that request. But his service which he did me deserved some greater favour.

Oed. Cause him to come to me immediately.

Joc. He is hard by. But why do you desire that?

Oed. I fear I have said too much, therefore I would see him.

Joc. He will be here. But am I not worthy, my lord, to know the cause of your grief.

Oed. I will not conceal from you my fears. After the obligations I owe you, to whom should I rather than to you discover my secrets in this my dismal state? Polybus, king of Corinth, was my father, and my mother was queen Merope, a Dorick. I was looked upon as the greatest of all the citizens until this accident happened to me; which, though surprising, yet did not deserve all the diligence I used in bringing it to light. A certain man, in a banquet, full of wine, calls me the supposed son of Polybus. Being grieved for that reproach, I scarce contained myself that whole day. The next day, going to my father and mother, I inquired of them my birth. They were both very sorry for that reproach which he cast upon me. And, though I loved them with much tenderness, that injury still perplexed me, and gave me a strong suspicion. I stole out of the city, unknown to my father and mother, went to the Pythian oracle, and Phœbus did not think fit to answer precisely to my demand; but declared other miserable and unhappy accidents which would befall me; that I must unlawfully converse with my mother, that I should shew to the world an unhappy offspring which would fill them

with horror, and that I should be the murderer of my father. Being terrified with that answer, I avoided returning to Corinth, and fled hither, [y] conducting myself by the stars, and endeavoured to find out a country whence I might be sure those terrible things which the oracle threatened would never come to pass; and in travelling I came into the same place wherein you say this king was slain. I will not conceal from you, madam, the smallest circumstance. When I was in this place, where the way divides itself into three parts, a herald and a man mounted upon a chariot drawn by beautiful horses met me. The charioteer and the master would thrust me out of the way by force. Being vexed at this affront, I smote the charioteer who turned me out of the way; and, as this old man sees me coming up to his chariot, he gave me two strokes on my head; nor did he suffer a punishment equal to this audacity. But, with one stroke of my staff, I tumbled him down from the middle of his chariot, he lies dead at my foot, and then I killed all his attendants. And if there was any relation between Laius and this stranger, which I killed, who is more miserable than myself? What man can be more hated of the gods? Whom it is not lawful for any of the citizens or strangers to receive into their houses, nor to speak to; but they are commanded to drive me from their houses. Nor was it any other but me who pronounced these sad imprecations

[y] *Conducting myself by the stars.*] A proverbial speech, spoken of those who go a long voyage, and are directed by the stars where to fix their habitation. Or, perhaps, the poet meant the time of Oedipus's absence from his country, measured out by the falling and rising of stars at certain seasons. Or, lastly, that he directed his course by the stars, as sailors do, who foretel their prosperous or unhappy voyage according to their rising or falling. So great was the esteem which the ancients had for astronomy, that they thought all things below were influenced by celestial bodies.

against myself. I defile his bed whom I slew with my own hands. Am I not vile? Am I not all over polluted? If I must flee hence, in my flight I must avoid my parents and my country, or, otherwise, I must be joined in marriage to my mother, and kill my father Polybus, who gave me birth and tender education. Cannot one say with justice, that all this is the curse of cruel Fortune resolved to persecute me? No, therefore, no, by the sacred worship of the gods, let me not see that terrible day, but let me rather be driven from the face of the earth, than stain myself with so black a crime.

Cho. This relation, my lord, gives us some uneasiness, but, until you are fully informed of him who will soon be here, you ought to preserve some hope.

Oed. I will preserve it until I have spoken with this shepherd.

Joc. When he is come, what do you think to do then?

Oed. I shall tell you, if he will speak the same language with you, I shall be delivered from all my fears.

Joc. What did I tell you, my lord, which you most remarked?

Oed. You told me that he said robbers killed him; if, therefore, still he will continue to say that number, I did not kill him; for one can never be equal with many; but if he will say that one man alone did it, then, apparently, that one can be no other than myself.

Joc. Be assured of this, that it is not in his power to deny it, for all the city heard his story, and not I alone. But if he should contradict his former discourse, the murder of Laius can never fall upon you, whom Loxias himself said should die by my child; nevertheless, you see that the miserable child did not kill him, but himself perished before.

Therefore, I shall give no more credit to the last oracle than to the first.

Oed. You judge very right, madam, yet pray send a servant who may order him to come before us; be that thy chief care.

Joc. I will send immediately; but let us go into the palace; there is nothing that I will not do to oblige you.

ACT III. SCENE IV.

Chorus.

Strophe I.

[z] May the gods grant me to enjoy a happy state, while I preserve that venerable sanctity in all my words and actions which are required by those laws which descended from Heaven, whereof Olympus is the only father; nor did the mortal race of men beget them, nor is it in their power to bury them in oblivion; there is in those laws a powerful God who triumphs over our impiety, and who never grows old.

Antistrophe I.

Insolence begets tyranny; insolence, when it adds

[z] *May the gods grant me to enjoy a happy state, while I preserve.*] Jocasta, on receiving the message of the natural death of Polybus, whom she supposed to be the real father of Oedipus, who, according to the oracle, was to have killed his father; and having been told, likewise, by the same oracle, that Laius's own child was to be his murderer, which child, she thought, being exposed by her, in its infancy, on the mountains, had perished there, and that Laius, according to the common report, was killed by robbers, though in every thing she was deceived, was so presumptuous as to accuse even the oracle of falsehood, for which the Chorus, though modestly, blames her, and in his own person deprecates the like impiety, and the punishment due to her.

crime to crime, and having raised men to the highest precipice, it throws them down into fatal necessity, and their fortunes forsake them, and they fall from that grandeur to which their injustice raised them. But I beseech the gods never to deprive the city of that happiness of which Oedipus was the author, for I still put myself under the protection of the gods.

Strophe II.

But if any one is so insolent by his actions or his words to insult the gods without any fear of their justice or reverence for their temples, let numberless evils fall upon him to punish his impious delights, since he loves injustice, abandons himself to impiety, and restrains not his hands from sacrilegious acts. What man hereafter will govern himself by reason? If those practices are recompensed, to what purpose is it for me to lead up dances in honour of the gods?

Antistrophe II.

No more I'll go to worship Apollo at the sacred navel of the earth, nor to the temple at [a] Abæ, nor to Olympia, if these oracles be not justified to all the world. But thou, O Jupiter, universal governor, let not your power pass these things unpunished, for they disrespect the oracles which foretold the fate of Laius, nor is Apollo honoured, and the worship of the gods is quite neglected.

[a] *Abæ.*] A place in Lycia where Apollo had a temple, saith the Scholiast; others say it was a village of Phocis, where his temple stood before that of Delphi was built; particularly Herodotus, and Stephanus, the Byzantian. We are told by Pausanias, that this temple was burned by Xerxes. Camerarius cites a passage from Pausanias, wherein he reckons Abæ among the cities of Phocis, and says that those who inhabit it came first from Argos, and that it had its name from Abas their leader, the son of Lynceus and Hypermnestra.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Jocasta, Chorus, Attendants.

Joc. O [b] princes of the land, I took in my hand these crowns to go to the temples of the gods to offer them sacrifices, for Oedipus is disturbed in mind with many anxious thoughts, nor as a prudent man judges of the oracle which he heard to day, by that which was delivered formerly, but listens attentively to those who tell him terrible things; and all the counsel which I give him is vain. Therefore, I came to thee as a suppliant, [c] O Lycian Apollo, for you are the nearest, with sacrifices and prayers; beseeching you would send us a blessed deliverance from our present evils. We are all in the utmost consternation to see this prince in the same pressure of spirit as we see a pilot, who can no longer defend his ship against the fury of the winds.

[b] *Princes of the land.*] Among the ancients not only kings, but all honourable men and chiefs of the kingdom, were called χώρας ἄνακτες, and such are the Chorus here called, not so much from their power, as the reverence due to their office, being some of them priests, and the rest ancient Theban citizens. For the original signification of the word ἄναξ is a saviour or defender; wherefore the gods are commonly called ἄνακτες. Homer tells us that Scamandrius, the son of Hector, was, by the Trojans, called Astyanax, because his father was τῆ ἄστεος ἄναξ, the defender of the city.

——————————— ἀυτὰρ οἱ ἄλλοι
Ἀστυάνακτ', οἷος γὰρ ἐρύετο Ἰλιον Ἕκτωρ.

But him Astyanax the Trojans call,
From his great father who defends the wall.

Mr. Dryden.

[c] *O Lycian Apollo, for you are the nearest.*] There was as well at Thebes as at Athens a Gymnasium, called the Lyceum, where Apollo was worshipped, which being the nearest to the palace of all the temples, Apollo is, therefore, called ἄγχιστος, nearest.

ACT IV. SCENE II.

Shepherd of Corinth, Chorus, Jocasta.

Shep. Thebans, [d] can I learn from you where is the palace of king Oedipus? But chiefly tell me of himself, if you know where he is.

Cho. This is the palace, and himself is within. This is his queen, and the mother of his children.

Shep. May she ever be happy in her family, and may nothing disturb the glorious union between her and her royal consort.

Joc. And you, also, stranger, because of your good wishes on my behalf; but tell me why you came here, and what news you bring.

Shep. Happy news, madam, to your whole house, and to the king.

Joc. What is it? and from whence are you come?

Shep. From Corinth; that tale which I shall soon unravel will certainly give you joy, but it will likewise give you sadness.

Joc. But what can produce in me two such contrary effects?

[d] *Can I learn from you.*] The arrival of this Corinthian shepherd is an admirable incident, and produces the best remembrance the theatre ever saw. For this shepherd, thinking to convince Oedipus of his error, and inform him who were really his parents, instead of doing him a piece of service, which he designed, cast him into the most horrible of all misfortunes, and let him see that he was both a parricide and an incestuous person.

Aristotle brings this as an example of the most surprising peripetie that can possibly come upon a theatre; for he saith, cap. xi. Art. Poet. "A peripetie is a change of one fortune into "another, contrary to what was expected; and that change "happens either necessarily or probably, as in the Oedipus of "Sophocles; for he, who comes to tell him agreeable news, and "ought to deliver him out of those fears, into which the thoughts "of committing incest with his mother had cast him, does the "quite contrary, in telling him plainly what he is."

Shep. It is the report at Corinth that the people of Isthmus are resolved to make Oedipus their king.

Joc. But why? Is not old Polybus still king?

Shep. No, madam; he is dead.

Joc. What sayest thou? Is old Polybus dead?

Shep. Unless I say true, I submit to lose my life?

Joc. Servants, go, speedily, and tell your master this news. O, ye oracles of the gods, where are you? Oedipus formerly fled from his country for fear he should kill his father; and now the fates have cut his thread of life, and not his son.

ACT IV. SCENE III.

Oedipus, Jocasta, Chorus, Shepherd of Corinth.

Oed. On what important occasion, my Jocasta, have you sent for me out of the palace?

Joc. Hear this stranger, and when you have heard, consider on what foundations are grounded these venerable oracles of the gods.

Oed. Who is he? and what news doth he bring me?

Joc. He comes out of Corinth, with the news that your father, Polybus, is dead.

Oed. What sayest thou, stranger? Speak this thyself.

Shep. If I must begin with this news, then know that he is dead.

Oed. Whether was it by conspiracy, or by a disease?

Shep. A small disease sends ancient bodies to the grave.

Oed. It seems, then, he died of a disease.

Shep. Yes; and for his great age to which he lived.

Oed. Oh! Oh! Why then, Jocasta, should any one regard the Pythian foretelling altar, or those birds which chirp in the air? who reported that I was to

kill my father, yet he lies in his grave, and I am here; nor did I ever hold up arms to touch his life, unless he died with the grief that he could not see me; so he might indeed have died by me. Therefore, Polybus lies in his tomb, and hath borne with him the accomplishment of those oracles which deserve only my contempt.

Joc. Did I not tell you this before?

Oed. You did; but I was seized with fear.

Joc. Therefore, now do not let such thoughts as these disturb your mind.

Oed. Ought I not to fear, lest I pollute my mother's bed.

Joc. But what should a man fear whom fortune favours? There is no foreseeing future events with certainty; it is the best to lead an easy life free from anxious care. Do not fear to commit that incest with your mother, for many men in dreams imagined that they have slept with their mothers; but he, who would lead a peaceable life must disregard such illusions.

Oed. Well hast thou spoken, did not she live who bore me; but since she lives, there is still much reason to fear, after all you can say.

Joc. Is not the death of your father a great sign that the other oracle will not be accomplished?

Oed. It is true; but yet, I say, while she lives my fears are not groundless.

Shep. But what woman plungeth you into all this fear?

Oed. Merope, old man, the wife of Polybus.

Shep. What is there in her to cause this fear?

Oed. The accomplishment of a grievous oracle.

Shep. What oracle, my lord? May I know it?

Oed. Loxias once said that I must converse carnally with my mother, and spill my father's blood with these my hands; wherefore long ago I lived far from Corinth, and their absence was happy to

me, notwithstanding it is a great pleasure to see my parents.

Shep. And did these fears banish you from Corinth?

Oed. Yes; for I was not willing to be my father's murderer.

Shep. Why, therefore, should I not deliver you from that fear, since out of kindness to you I came?

Oed. If you do, you shall receive of me a recompense proportionable to that great service.

Shep. And, indeed, for that reason I came, that, when you return to Corinth, I might deserve your grace, and live happily under your government.

Oed. But I will by no means go to my mother.

Shep. It is plain you are ignorant of what you do.

Oed. How? old man, by the gods explain that riddle to me.

Shep. Yes; if it be that which keeps you from returning home to Corinth.

Oed. I dread lest Phœbus hath been too true.

Shep. What, lest you commit incest with your mother?

Oed. It is that which perpetually affrights me.

Shep. But be assured you put yourself in fear without just cause.

Oed. Why? If I am son of those parents?

Shep. Therefore I inform you that Polybus was not your father.

Oed. What hast thou said? Was not Polybus my father?

Shep. No more than I am, but even alike.

Oed. But how is he who begat me no father?

Shep. Neither did he beget you, nor I.

Oed. Why then did he call me his son.

Shep. Know that he received you as a gift from my hands.

Oed. Did he so cherish what he received from another hand?

Shep. The want of children engaged him to do it.

Oed. Did you buy me? Or was I your son?

Shep. I found you on the top of mount Cithæron.

Oed. Why did you travel over those places?

Shep. There I had the care of some flocks.

Oed. Then you was a shepherd therefore.

Shep. My lord, I saved your life in that time.

Oed. In what state did you find me?

Shep. Your pierced feet may witness that.

Oed. Woe is me! What old evil is that you mention?

Shep. I will ease you of your doubt, the ends of your feet were boared through.

Oed. I received this reproach from my swaddling-bands.

Shep. [e] And from thence you received the name you bear.

Oed. By the gods tell me, from my father or mother?

Shep. I know not; but he who gave thee to me knows it better than I.

Oed. Did you receive me of another, or did you find me yourself?

Shep. No; but another shepherd gave thee to me.

Oed. Who is he; can you tell me?

Shep. He was said to be one of the shepherds of Laius.

Oed. Of him who was formerly king of this country?

Shep. Yes, my lord; the same.

Oed. Is he still living, that I may see him?

[e] *And from thence you received the name you bear.*] *i. e.* By composition of these words, διὰ τὸ οἰδεῖν τὰς πόδας. Thus Seneca brings in an old man telling him,—

Forata ferro gesseras vestigia,
Tumore nactus nomen ac vitio pedum.

Your feet were pierc'd with iron, from which sore
And Tumour you are named.

Shep. You may know that best who are of this country.

Oed. Is there any of you who stand here who know that shepherd whom he mentions; and who saw him in the fields, or here? Declare it; for this matter must be made plain. [*To the Chorus.*

Cho. I suppose him no other than him who is of the fields, whom before you desired to see; but the queen herself may best tell that.

Oed. Madam, do you know whether he whom we sent to search for be him whom he speaks of?

Joc. Who is it whom he spoke of? Be not disturbed, nor permit that these things, which so rashly were spoken of, be repeated.

Oed. That cannot be; since I have found out all these lights, I will not neglect to discover my birth.

Joc. By the gods, if you regard your peace of mind, inquire not that; it is enough that I am a wretch.

Oed. The affront would not fall upon you, though I were born a slave in the third degree.

Joc. Nevertheless, I beseech you, obey me, and cease to make this search.

Oed. I will not be persuaded; I must discover my birth.

Joc. Believe me, my lord, my reasons for giving you this counsel are just.

Oed. All that you say only augments my pain, and excites my curiosity.

Joc. O unfortunate man! I wish you never may know who you are.

Oed. Let some go and bring that shepherd to me; let her rejoice in her noble race.

Joc. Alas! alas! unhappy man! this is the only thing I have to say to you, and this is the last time that ever I shall say that.

ACT IV. SCENE IV.

Chorus, Oedipus, Shepherd of Corinth.

Cho. What sadness obliged the queen to retire? I fear lest that silence will have some dreadful end.

Oed. Let her do what she will; though my parentage is but mean, I will know it. She thinks greatly, as a woman, and, doubtless, is ashamed of my mean birth; [f] but I think myself the child of fortune, who gave freely to me, and I will never blush at her favours. I was born of that mother, and kindred months raised me from a contemptible state to the highest degree of honour, and my birth would be the same, though I should cease to know it.

Chorus, STROPHE.

Cho. If I am a prophet, and skilful in my art, by Jove, Cithæron, to-morrow shall not pass, before you shall discover to us the country and the mother of Oedipus; and, ere we shall institute dances in your honour, to give you thanks for the pleasure you will do our king. Apollo grant that my predictions may be accomplished.

ANTISTROPHE.

1097 And you, O prince! [g] who of the immortal gods

[f] *But I think myself the child of fortune, &c.*] These are called sons of fortune, who, being of unknown or very obscure birth, have raised themselves, or upstarts. Thus, Horace, Sat. vi. lib. 2. speaking of himself, says,

Luserat in campo fortunæ filius.

Dacier.

[g] *Who of the immortal gods?*] Observe the extraordinary love of the Chorus for Oedipus, and how willing they are to interpret everything to his advantage, for here they hope he will prove to be son of one of the gods of the mountains. It is well known that Pan is the god of shepherds, and that his dominion is in the fields, therefore he is ealled νόμιος, and the Scholiasts say that

begat you? what daughter of Pan, god of the mountains, bore you? art thou the fruits of Apollo's amours? for he often diverts himself in the fields and mountains; or did Mercury, the Cyllenian god, or Bacchus, who inhabits the mountain-tops, beget you on any of the Heliconian nymphs, with whom he most commonly sports?

Oed. If I can judge of an old man whom I never met with before, I think I see that shepherd whom we waited for so long, and he agrees in old age with this stranger; besides, I know those that lead him to be my servants; but you may know him better than I, for, doubtless, you have seen him before.

Cho. I know him, for he belonged to Laius, and was his faithful shepherd.

Oed. First, I ask you, Corinthian stranger, is this he of whom you spake to me?

Shep. He is the same.

ACT IV. SCENE V.

Oedipus, Shepherd of Corinth, Phorbas, Chorus.

Oed. Approach, old man, and answer to what I shall ask you. Wast thou once of Laius?

Phor. I was his servant, not bought, but brought up in his family.

Oed. What business did you follow?

Phor. I had the care of his flocks for the most part of my life.

Oed. In what places were you ordinarily conversant?

Apollo is likewise so called; probably he might have that name from having been shepherd to Admetus. And Triclinius tells us that Bacchus is said to inhabit the mountains, because his raging women are conversant about them, or because he had a temple in Cithæron.

Phor. On mount Cithæron, and other places thereto adjoining.

Oed. Do you know this man; have you ever seen him anywhere?

Phor. In what employment; what man do you mean?

Oed. He who is before your eyes; did you ever meet with him anywhere?

Phor. I do not remember that ever I saw him in my life.

Shep. It is no wonder, my lord; but I will quickly bring to his remembrance things which he hath forgot, for I know well that he knows me; on Cithæron he fed two flocks and I but one, and we passed together [h] three whole successive seasons, from the beginning of spring to the end of autumn; but, at the approach of winter, I drave mine into my stables, but he drave his into those of Laius. Do I say the truth, or do I not?

Phor. You say what is true; I remember it, though it be a long time ago.

Shep. Speak, tell me; do you remember that you gave me a certain infant, that I should bring it up as my own?

Phor. What is it you say? Why do you ask that question?

Shep. This, my friend, is that same infant.

Phor. Curses light on thee, thou wretch! wilt thou not be silent?

Oed. O do not chastise him, it is you who deserve chastisement rather than he.

[h] *Three whole successive seasons.*] The Greek is, τρεῖς ὅλας ἐμμήνους χρόνους. That the sense I have given of this passage is right, (not three whole months, as it is in most editions,) is plain from hence, that, from the spring to the rising of Arcturus, which is about the beginning of October, much exceeds three months; and from the spring to the setting thereof, are reckoned the three seasons of the year, *i. e.* spring, summer, and autumn.

Phor. My lord, wherein do I offend?

Oed. In not speaking of that infant of whom he inquires.

Phor. He knows not what he says, but amuseth you unprofitably.

Oed. You will not speak for favour, but tortures shall make you speak.

Phor. No, by the gods; do not so affront my age.

Oed. Will not somebody quickly bind his hands?

Phor. Ah me, a wretch! Why, what would you know?

Oed. Did you give that infant to him whom he mentions?

Phor. I gave it to him, but wish that that had been the last day of my life!

Oed. Wish not for death; if you will not tell me the truth, that shall be your portion.

Phor. But, much more if I speak, I perish.

Oed. This man, it seems, is only for delaying.

Phor. Not I, my lord; but I have told that I gave it to him.

Oed. Whence did you receive him; was he yours, or did you receive him of another?

Phor. He was not mine, but I received him of another.

Oed. But from which of the citizens, and from what house did you receive him?

Phor. By the gods, sir, inquire no more.

Oed. You are a dead man if I ask you again.

Phor. He was of the family of Laius.

Oed. Whether was he his son or one of his servants?

Phor. Woe is me! cruel necessity enforces me to speak.

Oed. And me to hear, but yet I must hear it.

Phor. He was called his child. The queen can better tell than I whose he is.

Oed. Did she give him to you?

Phor. Yes, my lord.

Oed. For what end?

Phor. That I should kill him.

Oed. Miserable woman! the child she bore; for what reason?

Phor. For fear of an unfortunate oracle.

Oed. What oracle?

Phor. The oracle was that he should kill his parents.

Oed. Then, why did you give him to this old man?

Phor. Out of pity, my lord, and I thought to send him into another country, but he, in saving your life, reserved you for numberless evils; and, if you are he whom he speaks of, the world cannot produce a more unhappy man.

Oed. [1] Alas! alas! all things are come out plain. O sun, whose radiant beams enlighten the earth, this is the last time I behold thee, who am born of those of whom I should not; who have conversed carnally with her from whose loathed embraces nature commanded me to fly! and have slain, with my cursed hand, those who gave me being! [*Exit.*

[1] *Alas! alas! all things are come out plain.*] This remembrance is what Aristotle calls the most beautiful of all, because it is accompanied with a change of fortune, or peripetie; for it is no sooner made, but Oedipus falls from happiness to misery. cap. xi. Art. Poet. "The best remembrance is that which is "found with the peripetie, as in the Oedipus, for that will pro- "duce either compassion or terror, of which tragedy is an imita- "tion on this passage." Mr. Dacier hath these following remarks: "This reason is drawn from this general principle, that tragedy "is the imitation of an action; and not only of an action, but "of such an action which excites pity and fear; and this is "found in that remembrance which he prefers to the rest: there "is action, since it makes the good or ill fortune of the principal "personages; and it cannot fail of exciting terror or compassion, "since, in one and the same moment, it decides things of so great "importance, and produces such grand effects.

ACT IV. SCENE VI.

Chorus.

Cho. O! Race of mortals, how little I esteem the state of your felicity! It is but an idle dream that appears great, and vanishes in the same moment. By your sad example, most unhappy Oedipus, I am taught to say, no man on earth is happy; who, raised to the highest state of mortal glory, after your signal victory over Sphinx, who ravaged our country, didst deliver it from the death she threatened, from our deliverer became our king, and was honoured as a god in Thebes: now who is more unhappy? Who more oppressed by fortune's malice? Who ever suffered so terrible a change? O noble Oedipus, [k] the same great port sufficed both for your father and yourself to sail into. How could, unhappy man, how could your father's bed receive you so long without your knowledge? Time only, who sees all things, found you out, and discovered your unhappy marriage, begetting and begotten! O son of Laius, I wish I had never seen thee; I lament thy most unhappy state, who, after you had restored light to my dying eyes, hast plunged them into most horrid darkness.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Shepherd of Corinth, Chorus, Messenger.

Mes. Most honourable seniors of this land, what

[k] *The same great port.*] The poet metaphorically calls Jocasta a port, or place where ships both put in and from whence they launch forth, because Oedipus having married his mother, begat children on the same body of which he was born; so was both her son and father to her children; or because she was married both to her husband and son.

are you now about to hear and see, and what grief will you conceive if you interest yourselves in the evils of the house of Labdacus? For I am persuaded that [1] neither the water of Ister nor Phasis can wash the house from those crimes by which it is polluted, which are now unseen, and will soon come to light, which have been willingly committed. For the most afflicting of all evils are those which are committed of deliberate purpose.

Cho. Nothing is wanting from what we have heard to complete our misery; but what can you farther say?

Mes. Jocasta is no more.

Cho. Most wretched princess, how did she die?

Mes. By her own hand: words are too weak to express the horror of that absent spectacle, yet, as far as my memory will permit me, you shall hear the sad recital of her sufferings. She entered, with all the agonies of black despair, into the palace, and flew suddenly to the nuptial chamber, tearing her hair with both her hands; and, having shut the door, she calls Laius formerly slain, mentioning her offspring,

[1] *Neither the water of Ister nor Phasis.*] *Gr.* Ἴστρον ἔτε Φᾶσιν. They were two great rivers, the former, otherwise called the Danube, passeth by Illyricum and runs into the Euxine sea; the other is a famous river in Colchis.

The pagans fancied that the water of the sea, or those great rivers, had power to wash away all pollution of crimes: in Virgil, Æneas would not touch his household gods before he had purged himself of the blood he had spilt.

> *Me bello e tanto digressum et cæde recenti,*
> *Attrectare nefas, donec me flumine vivo*
> *Abluero.*

Ajax, in the tragedy so called, went out upon pretence of reconciling himself to the gods, by washing after killing the beasts. And St. Augustin against the Donatists says, *In multis idolorum sacrilegis sacris baptizati homines perhibentur, i. e.* washed. The Pagans had this notion from the knowledge of the deluge, by which they learned that God purged the world.

by whom he was miserably murdered, but left her to bear unhappy children to her own child. Then she addressed herself to her bed, where the wretch both bore a husband by her husband, and children by her son. How after that she died I know not; for Oedipus rushed in roaring, who hindered us from beholding her misery. Then we fixed our eyes on him to observe his motions; as he comes along he begs of us to give him a sword, asked to know where he should find his wife, whom he would not look upon as his wife, but his mother, who bore both himself and his children. We who were present did not regard to grant his request, yet some god, in favour to his phrenzy, conducted him to her; then he approached with dreadful cries, as if some drew him by force. He rushed through the double gates, drew from their hinges the sonorous portcullis, and comes into the chamber, where we see the queen hanging by a twisted rope; no sooner he beheld her, but he roars out like a furious lion, looses the hanging rope, and the wretched queen falls on the ground: [m] and then appeared a more horrible thing,

[m] *And then appeared a more horrible.*] This description of the manner in which Oedipus cut out his eyes is very ingenious and eloquent; and is a good instance where that general rule, which Horace lays down, is observed.

Multaque tolles
Ex oculis, quæ mox narret facundia præsens.

Had the action itself of Oedipus been represented on the theatre, nothing could have been more terrible and shocking. And this narration both hides the horror, and moves at the same time the compassion of the audience for that miserable prince. So great is the force of art in making things in their own nature disagreeable become objects of pleasure and delight by an ingenious narration: for, as in painting, an object, in itself the most detested to human eyes, may be so painted by an ingenious artist, as to seem very agreeable upon canvass; so it is in poetry, as Despreux ingeniously observes in his Art of Poetry:

for Oedipus pulling the golden clasps from her garments, wherewith she was adorned, he then forced the points of them into his eyes, saying thus; that he would not behold her, nor what evils he had been the cause of, but, plunged in eternal darkness, he would not see nor distinguish those objects which present themselves before him. In repeating incessantly these words, he raised up his eye-brows and cut out his eyes; his bloody eye-balls stained his beard, nor did they only send down moistening drops, but even a black shower of blood, thick as hail, poured down. These are the sad calamities in which the king and queen had both a share; and there former felicity, which was before truly great, is now turned to weeping, lamentation, death, infamy, and the worst of evils that can be named are less than theirs.

Cho. But with what evils is he now oppressed?

Mes. He roars out that they should open the gates, and shew to all the Thebans a parricide, and his mother's —— saying abominable things, which I dare not mention; that he would cast himself out of the kingdom, and the imprecations which he had pronounced against himself suffered him no longer to continue in his palace! In his present state he hath need of some assistance, and some leader, for this evil is great than can be borne. The folds of the

Il n'est point de serpent, ni de monstre odieux,
Qui par l'art imité, ne puisse plaire aux yeux,
D'un pinceau delicat l'artifice agreable,
Du plus affreux objet fait un objet aimable.
Ainsi pour nous charmer, la tragedie en pleurs,
D'Oedipe tout sanglant, fit parler les douleurs.

There's not a monster bred beneath the sky,
But, well dispos'd by art, may please the eye.
A curious workman, by his skill divine,
From an ill object makes a good design.
Thus to delight us, tragedy in tears,
Provokes, for Oedipus, our hopes and fears.

gates are opened, and soon thou wilt see such a spectacle as would move an enemy to pity.

ACT V. SCENE II.

The Palace Gates are opened, from whence Oedipus approaches with his Eyes pulled out, which the Chorus seeing, startle and turn away their Faces.

Chorus, Oedipus.

Cho. O spectacle of horror which none can bear to see! the sadest that ever I beheld. Miserable prince, what madness hath seized you? What cruel god hath plunged you in these seas of woe? Alas, alas, unhappy man! I cannot look on thee though I have a strong desire to see you, to speak to you, and to hear you, such horror dost thou give me.

Oed. Alas! alas! miserable man, to what land am I borne, whither is my voice spread! O my fortune, whither art thou come!

Cho. Forsaken you quite, and given place to the sadest evils, evils which none can bear to hear or see.

Oed. O my cloud of darkness which covers my eyes, abominable, and which none can dissipate! Woe is me, my sad grief which proceeds not only from my rage of madness, but likewise from the memory of my crimes!

Cho. In this thy wretched state, thy complaints are just.

Oed. Ah! thou who art still my only friend in my misfortunes, who still art careful even for me, a blind man; alas! alas! thou dost not deceive me, but I well know thy voice, although involved in darkness.

Cho. What desperate deed is this thou hast done! How darest thou thus tear out thy eyes? What angry god lent thee his aid?

Oed. It was Apollo, my friend, who is the only author of my miseries; none ever lent me his aid, this wretched hand alone hath done the deed. Why should I longer enjoy my sight, to behold nought but objects of horror and sadness?

Cho. My lord, what you say is too true.

Oed. Is there ought, my friends, that I could behold with pleasure? Is there ought that I can love or converse with? Banish me hence with speed, my friends; banish me hence a cursed monster, and the most hated of all mortals to the gods.

Cho. Thou art doubly wretched, both for thy ills themselves, and for thy sense of them. O! that I had never known thee.

Oed. Let him perish whosoever he was, who loosed the cruel cords from off my feet, and preserved me from the cold arms of death. His pity hath been fatal to me, for, had I then died, I had not been the unhappy cause of so many evils to myself and friends.

Cho. There I too had been happy to my wish.

Oed. I had not been my father's murderer, nor had men seen me marry her who gave me life. But now I am a wretched son of defiled parents, a monster born of her from whom I begat children, and to say all, the greatest and most horrid evils are fallen upon Oedipus.

Cho. My lord, I know not how to approve this action, it had been better for you not to have been at all than thus to drag a miserable life, deprived of eyes.

Oed. Do not tell me that I have done ill in tearing out my eyes, for I know not with what eyes I could see my father when I come to the subterraneous habitations, or my miserable mother; to both

which greater evil I have done than death itself. But as my children daily grow up, still grows my pleasure in beholding them: by no means, for neither children, nor country, nor palace, nor sacred images of the gods, could afford pleasure to my eyes, of which I, a most unhappy man, one of the greatest in Thebes, have deprived myself, in commanding that all should banish that impious man, whom the gods have declared the cause of all the public calamities, and to say all in one word, this son of Laius. And after I have discovered my shame could I enjoy in quietness my sight? By no means; but, if there were a way to seal up my hearing faculty, I would make this double sacrifice to my despair, by closing up that gate from the knowledge of my evils, that I might be both deaf and blind, for that is sweet to have but little sense in such terrible evils. O Cithæron! why did you receive me? Why, when you had received me, did you not suffer me to perish? That I had not shewn myself to men of what parents I was born! O Polybus, and Corinth, falsely called my country, you have brought me up under a human form, a monster who am a reproach to nature. O triple ways, and dark forest, grove of oaks, and narrow place in the triple way, who have drank my father's blood, which my hands have shed, do you still remember me, and what crimes you have seen me commit, and how far short they come of those I have since committed! O marriage, fatal marriage, you have begot me, and, having so done, made me return to the womb that wrapt me yet unborn, and produced fathers, brothers, children, husbands, wives, mothers, and the most vile deeds that human thoughts can form: one ought to tremble even to pronounce such horrid crimes. By the gods, as soon a possible hide me, kill me, or cast me into the sea, where you shall

never see me more; [m] deign to touch a miserable man; do me this last service; fear not; the evils which I suffer cannot befal any but myself.

Cho. But Creon is here in a proper time for your demand, both to give you such counsel and assistance as are necessary for you, for instead of thee he is left as sole guardian of this land.

Oed. Woe is me! What therefore shall I say to him? What succours can I expect after those unjust suspicions which I had of him?

ACT V. SCENE III.

Creon, Oedipus, Chorus, Oedipus's Children.

Cre. I came not to insult your evils, Oedipus, nor to reproach you; but you Thebans, if the race of men be not your care, at least revere the sacred sun's all-feeding flame, which hath brought to light and pointed out that victim on which all our sufferings are justly charged. A victim, which neither the earth, nor the [n] sacred rain, which is sprinkled on us at these altars, nor the light can endure. Go

[m] *Deign to touch, &c.*] This is founded upon the superstition of the ancients, who supposed that if any one touched a wicked man, he thereby drew down upon his own head the anger of the gods. In a Latin tragedy, cited by Cicero, Thyestes says to the Chorus,

Nolite, hospites, ad me adire, illico, istic,
Ne contagio mea bonis, umbrave obsit.
Tanta vis sceleris in corpore hæret. DACIER.

[n] *Sacred rain.*] *Gr.* ὄμβρος ἱερὸς, it is so called because the priests sprinkled the heads of those who were present at the sacrifices with holy water, which fell on them as rain. The apostle seems to allude to this practice in the following words: Heb. x. 22. "Let us draw near, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil "conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." And Ezek. xxxvi. 25. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and "ye shall be clean from all your filthiness."

and speedily take him into the palace, for it is fit that relations only should be witnesses of each others afflictions.

Oed. By the gods, since that you have disproved my opinion of you, and being the best of men come to me who am the worst; grant me this favour which I ask of you; it is more for your sake than for mine I ask it.

Cre. What is your request?

Oed. Banish me out of this land as speedily as possible; send me where I shall no more hold discourse with man.

Cre. Be well assured I had done it, only that first I would learn from the gods what is proper to be done.

Oed. But have not the gods plainly declared, that you should destroy me?

Cre. But [o] in the state we are in, we ought to do nothing before we consult them.

Oed. Will you consult the gods for such a wretch as I am?

Cre. Ah! your misfortunes warn us what faith we ought to put in their oracles.

Oed. I beseech and exhort you to bury the princess, who lies dead in the palace, and you will perform your duty to you relation; for me, there is no reason my father's city should desire my longer continuance among them, but suffer me to live on Mount Cithæron, which my father and mother, when alive, chose for my sepulchre, that I might die according to their wills, where they decreed I should end my days. This I know well, that neither disease nor any other accident have power to put a

[o] *In the state we are in.*] Though it had been positively decreed by the oracle, that the murderer of Laius should be taken away from the earth, yet he being the lawful king, Creon thought it proper to consult again the oracle as to Oedipus's request.

period to my days; for I should not have been saved from the arms of death, but to be reserved for some more horrid evils. But let my cruel fortune do what she will with me, take no care of my sons, they are men, so that wherever they are their courage will be their sure defence; but earnestly I entreat you to take care of my poor daughters, who have been always fed with the choicest dainties; though I was absent they always shared the same things with me. Permit me to hold them in my arms, and lament over them those evils in which they are involved: if I touch them with my hand, I shall think I see them still. By the gods do I not hear my children weeping? And Creon in pity to me hath sent me my children.

Cre. Yes, my lord, I have brought them, being willing to afford you this long-desired pleasure.

Oed. May you be ever happy, and may a milder fortune always accompany you than ever did me. My children, where are you? Come to your father's arms, who am your brother; a father, who have cut out my eyes, that now I cannot see you; a father, who, though innocent, have begot you of her who bore me. I mourn your fate, my children, when I consider the remaining part of your wretched life, which you must live among men: in what assemblies of citizens will you appear, what feasts, from whence you will not come weeping home, instead of the pleasure of seeing? But when you shall arrive to maturity of age to be married, who will marry you? [p] Who is he who will cast away his children to bear those reproaches which are charged upon our family?

[p] *Who is he will cast away his children, &c.*] It was looked upon among the Grecians, a reproachful thing for a virgin to live long unmarried: thus Orestes mourns Electra's unmarried life. It was the same among the Hebrews, for which reason, Judges, xi. 37. Jephtha's daughter desired two month's time of her father to go up and down the mountains to bewail her virginity.

What evil is wanting to complete your misery? Your father killed his father, and begat you of the same mother from whence himself was born. These reproaches will be cast on you, and after this who will marry you? There is not one, my children! But it will be your fortune to wear away your lives neglected and unmarried. Son of Menœceus, since you are left sole father to them, for we who begat them are no more, do not despise them in their wretched state, poor, friendless, and unmarried, nor let them suffer that punishment which is due only to my crimes; but have pity on their misery and their youth, who have no friend but you, grant me to touch your hand, in token that you hear my prayer. To you, my children, if you had understanding, I would commend many things; but, as you have not, pray only to the gods for me, [q] that they would not let me always live; and to grant that you may live a happier life ever while it lasts than you father.

Cre. You have shed tears enough, go into the palace.

Oed. I must obey you, how unpleasant soever it is to me.

Cre. All things have their proper seasons.

Oed. Knowest thou what favour I would ask?

Cer. What favour?

Oed. That you would immediately banish me from this land.

Cre. You ask from me a gift which the gods have enjoined.

Oed. But I am the most odious of all men to the gods.

Cre. Therefore our request shall the sooner be granted.

[q] *That they would not let me always live.*] The text here hath been corrupted; the true reading is ὃ καιρὸν ἀεὶ ζῆν, and according to this I have translated it, not ὃ καιρὸς ἀεὶ ζῆν, which is not sense.

Oed. Do you assure me of that?

Cre. I never speak but what I think.

Oed. Take me away then when you please.

Cre. Go in, but quit you children.

Oed. Ah, do not take them from me.

Cre. Do not insist to keep them, you know how often that of which you was most desirous hath been most fatal to you.

Cho. [r] Inhabitants of Thebes, you see this Oedipus, who explained the famed ænigma, and to whose valour all things submitted, who owed his grandeur only to his spirit and his courage, into what sad calamities is he fallen? So that, when we consider his unhappy end, we may learn from thence to pronounce no mortal happy in the world before we have seen him happily pass over the last day of his life.

[r] *Inhabitants of Thebes.*] That which the Chorus saith here is properly an exode or epilogue, such as they ordinarily add to the ends of fables, and comprehends the moral sense. This epilogue is not sung, as Aristotle tells us in his Art. Poet. cap. 12. "The exode," saith he, "is all that which is said after the Chorus "hath left off singing, not to begin again."

THE

TRAGEDY OF ANTIGONE.

Dramatis Personae.

CREON, King of Thebes.
HÆMON, his Son.
TIRESIAS, a Prophet.
Chorus of ancient Men of Thebes.
A Messenger from the Watch.
Another Messenger.
A Servant.

WOMEN.

ANTIGONE, } two Sisters, and Daughters of Oedipus.
ISMENE, }
EURYDICE, Wife of Creon.

SCENE—Before Creon's Palace at Thebes.

ANTIGONE.

THE ARGUMENT.—*Antigone, who gives the title to this play, was daughter of Oedipus and sister to Eteocles and Polynices. These two brothers, in the wars between the Argians and Thebans, (Eteocles being for the Thebans and the other for the Argians,) slew each other in a single combat; whereupon, Creon, king of Thebes, decreed, that the body of Polynices should be exposed above ground, and that none, upon pain of death, should bury it. Nevertheless, his sister Antigone, not in the least affrighted at this decree, first covers it with a little earth; but the keepers, who were set to watch the carcase, not discovering her that time, they were threatened with death, by Creon, unless they produced the criminal. But, as they kept their post, Antigone coming finds the body uncovered, who, by her weeping, her mournful complaints and imprecations against those who uncovered the body, betrayed herself. Then was she brought before Creon, and immediately sentenced to be shut up alive in a covered vault, which was accordingly executed, where she hanged herself. Whereupon Hæmon, son of Creon, who had espoused her, seeing her sad catastrophe, for grief, stabbed himself; for which Eurydice, wife of Creon, likewise killed herself. And, lastly, Creon laments the loss of his wife and son.*

This same subject hath been treated upon by Euripides, but with this difference from Sophocles, that the former supposeth Hæmon and Antigone to be married, and have a son named Mœmon.

The character of Antigone in this play is much like that of Electra, in this same poet; for, as Chrysothemis is introduced disputing with Electra, and endeavouring to dissuade her from so desperate an attempt, as the revenging her father's death by killing his murderers; so is Ismene here, to dissuade Antigone from burying her brother, contrary to Creon's decree; whose mild and gentle disposition gives the poet a fair opportunity to raise the character of his heroine, while with the most convincing arguments she shews the justice and piety of the cause for which she suffered, and, by consequence, greatly moves an audience to compassion for her.

This tragedy is of the implex kind, for although there is no remembrance, yet there is a considerable change of fortune, both in the person of Antigone and Creon, which both shews that a change of fortune, or peripetie, and remembrance, may subsist apart from each other; and that either of them without the other, as well as both in conjunction, are sufficient to constitute an implex tragedy. In the Electra there is a double remembrance, without an immediate change of fortune; here a change of fortune without a remembrance; in the Oedipus Tyrannus they are both together, yet they are all implex tragedies.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Antigone and Ismene.

Ant. My dear sister, Ismene, dost thou know any of those evils which befell the house of Oedipus, which Jove will not bring upon us at last? For there is nothing grievous or free from trouble, nothing is vile or dishonourable, which I have not seen accomplished in mine and your evils. And now what is this they say again, that the king hath lately published an edict to the whole city; knowest thou aught of it? Hath the report yet reached thy ears? Or are the evils of our enemies, which are coming on us, kept secret from you alone?

Ism. No report, Antigone, of friends joyful or sad e'er reached my ears since we both were deprived of two brothers, who died in one day with their mutual hands, but that the Argian army is overthrown this night; I know nothing more, nor am I more fortunate or more aggrieved.

Ant. I knew it well, and, therefore, I called you out of the palace gates, that from me alone you may hear all.

Ism. What is it? You seem to revolve on some deep thought.

Ant. Why not? Hath not Creon thus distinguished our brothers, preferring one, and dishonouring the other in the affair of sepulture? According to law and justice, they say, he hath buried Eteocles in the earth, honourably among the dead below. But the dead body of Polynices, who miserably fell, they say is proclaimed to the citizens, that none should cover it with a sepulchre, or weep for it;

but all must suffer it [a] to lie unlamented, unburied, a sweet treasure for the birds to behold as their food. These things, they say, the good Creon hath decreed to you and me, (I say me) and all those who knew not the decree before, so plainly as it was decreed, now to come into it, and obey it, not as a thing of nought; but whosoever neglecteth the decree must lie exposed, a dead body, to be viewed by the people in the city. This is the present case, and you shall soon shew whether you are generously born, or a base daughter of good parents.

Ism. But what, ah me! if this be so, should I help you by transgressing the decree and burying Polynices?

Ant. Consider whether you will take pains and work along with me or no.

Ism. What a bold deed is this? Whither do your thoughts ramble?

Ant. Wilt thou help with thy hand to bear away the corpse?

Ism. [b] Dost thou think to bury one forbidden the city?

Ant. Thy brother and mine, if thou wilt not, I will bury; I will not prove a traiterss to him.

Ism. O miserable woman, while Creon forbids it!

Ant. But it is not for him to hinder me from paying my last offices to my friend.

[a] *To lie unlamented.*] Among the ancients, the next great punishment of the dead to that of lying exposed without burial was to lie unlamented. This was the judgement which God threatened against Jehoiakim, king of Judah. Jerem. xxii. v. 18, 19. "They shall not lament for him, saying, ah, my brother! or, "ah, sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, ah, Lord! or, "ah, his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass," &c.

[b] *Dost thou think to bury.*] This controversy between Ismene and her sister is admirably adapted to the poet's purpose, which is to raise the character of Antigone, by shewing that no arguments could prevail with her to neglect her duty to her dead brother, which makes her the greater object of pity, when afterwards we see her miserable fate.

Ism. Woe is me! Consider, sister, how our father died, hated and inglorious, by reason of discovered crimes, pulling out both his eyes with his own hand. And then another affliction, his mother, and wife likewise, with a cord lost her life contumeliously; the third, two miserable brothers in one day killed each other. And now we alone are left, consider how vilely we perish if we transgress the sentence or the power of tyrants, given them by virtue of the laws; but it is proper to consider this, that we are born women, who cannot contend with men; besides, since we are governed by superiors, we should submit to these things, and more grievous than these. I, therefore, asking pardon from those under the earth, that I am forced to suffer this, will obey [c] those in power; for to enterprise things which exceed our power is a great folly.

Ant. I will neither command you, nor, if you would do it, do I think that willingly you would act with me; but let it be as you think fit, I will bury him. This deed would please me, though I died for it. Beloved, I'll lie with him, with my friend, acting pious deeds by craft; for longer is the time in which I must please those below than those here, for there I shall ever lie: but, if it please thee, dishonour those rites which the gods do honour.

Ism. I do not dishonour them; but to do this against the will of all the citizens is very difficult.

Ant. You may give those excuses, but I will erect a sepulchre, and will go to my dear brother.

Ism. Woe is me! how I fear for thee, a wretch?

Ant. Fear not for me, direct your own life.

Ism. But you shall shew this deed to none, secretly conceal it, and so will I.

Ant. Woe is me! speak it out, for I shall hate

[c] *Those in power.*] Gr. τοῖς ἐν τέλει βεβῶσι, those that walk in the end; for a kingdom is the end or highest degree of power.

you much more if you are silent and declare it not to all the world.

Ism. Thou hast a courageous heart in a dangerous enterprise.

Ant. But I know how to please those whom chiefly I should please.

Ism. If you can, why not? But you love things which are impossible.

Ant. Therefore, when I am not able I'll desist.

Ism. But it doth not become you chiefly to seek after things which are difficult.

Ant. If you will speak thus, you will be odious to me. In justice you will be odious to the dead; but let me by my rashness suffer the bitterest punishment, for I shall suffer nothing so great that I shall not die honourably.

Ism. If it seems good to thee go; but know this, in that attempt thou shewest thyself unwise, though pious to thy brother.

ACT I. SCENE II.

Chorus.

Strophe I.

Cho. Hail thou most glorious light that ever shone on seven-gated Thebes. Thou eye of the golden day wast seen passing over the [d] Dircæan streams, and didst first repel the fugitive Argians with a nimble flight, who came with all their warlike preparation, armed with white bucklers. These Polynices brought upon our land provoked thereto by a doubt-

[d] *Dircæan streams.*] Dirce was wife of Lycus, king of Thebes, who was turned into a fountain of that name near Thebes, near which this battle between Creon and the Argians was fought.

ful strife with his brother, ([e] as an eagle shrill cries and flies upon the land, covered with snowy wings,) armed with much armour, and crested helmets.

Antistrophe I.

Who, though he stood upon the tower, and hissing with bloody spears round the seven-gated city, went hence e'er his cheeks were filled with our blood, or pitch and fire had laid waste our towers, such a fury of battle attacked the eagle's rear, that he became unable to oppose [f] his adversary the dragon. Jove hates the boasting of a proud tongue, and seeing them come with great violence, with noise of golden armour and pride, cast down Capaneus with a thunderbolt, hasting to boast of victory upon the walls.

[e] *As an eagle shrill cries.*] The poet by several metaphorical expressions compares Polynices to an eagle, calling his armour wings, his seven armies seven beaks, &c.

[f] *His adversary the dragon.*] The Scholiast says that, by the dragon here, the poet means the Thebans, as being descended of Draco, the son of Mars, and Tilphosa, one of the Erinnys; and by the eagle, Polynices, to represent the terror of the battle which was between them. But it is more probable to suppose the poet meant to shew that hatred which was between the two brothers. For Plutarch, in his book, De Invidia et Odio, says, that between those two animals there is so prodigious a hatred, that their blood, when they are killed, mingled together, will not incorporate into each other. Homer, Illiad xii. v. 201, describes a battle between them. And Virgil, likewise, Æneid. xi. v. 751.

Αἰετὸς ὑψιπέτης ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ λαὸν ἐέργων.
Φοινήεντα δράκοντα φέρων ὀνύχεσσι, πέλωρον,
Ζωὸν, ἔτ' ἀσπαίροντα, καὶ οὔπω λήθετο χάρμης:
Κόψε γὰρ ἀυτὸν ἔχοντα μετὰ στῆθος, παρὰ δειρήν.

Utque volans alte, raptum cum fulva draconem,
Fert aquila, implicuitque pedes, atque unguibus hæsit;
Socius at serpens sinuosa volumina versat,
Arrectisque horret squamis, et sibilat ore,
Arduus insurgens; illa haud minus urget obunco,
Luctantem rostro, simul æthera verberat alis.

STROPHE II.

[g] The leader, Capaneus, being struck, fell back upon the earth, who, then raging, breathed fierce fury against the city with the violence of the most terrible winds; thus was it on one side, and great Mars ruling the right wing, and overthrowing their ranks, distributed other evils among others. The seven leaders being posted at the seven gates, and all engaged in single combat against an equal number, left their brazen arms for Jupiter, the vanquisher. Except the terrible brothers, who, being born of one father and one mother, against each other arming their victorious spears, did both partake the lot of common death.

ANTISTROPHE II.

But glorious victory came grateful to famed Thebes. But now forget these wars, and let us go to all the temples of the gods with nightly choirs; and let Bacchus, who reigns in Thebes, be our leader.

But the king of the land, Creon, the son of Menœceus, having received some late commands of the gods, comes, revolving some serious thoughts, for [h] he hath called a council of the seniors.

[g] *The leader, Capaneus.*] He was husband to Evadne, and the fifth captain against Thebes; who, just as he had mounted the walls by the help of the Κλίμακες, or scaling ladders, of which some will have him to have been the first contriver, he was beaten down and slain with stones. This gave occasion to the poets to feign that he was struck down with a thunderbolt. Euripides introduces Adrastus speaking thus of him, because persons killed with lightning were thought hateful to the gods, and, therefore, denied burial and funeral rites.

Ἦ χωρὶς, ἱερὸν ὡς νεκρὸν, θάψαι θέλεις;
Shall he apart be buried, as accursed?

[h] *He hath called a council of the seniors.*] The persons whom Creon summoned to attend his council consisted of the most ancient men of the city: the office of the Chorus being more proper to the hoary head than those of younger years; viz. to

ACT II. SCENE I.

Creon, Chorus.

Cre. Ye honourable chiefs of Thebes, the gods with much tumult having shook the republic, again have raised it. I have sent my messengers for you to come separate from all the rest, knowing this well, that you always revered the power and the government of Laius; and likewise of Oedipus when he ruled the city; and when he died, that you still remained in the same firm faith towards his children. And since that they have fallen in one day by a mutual fate, striking and stricken with their own impious hands, I possess the power and kingdoms by right of affinity to those who fell. [i] It is difficult to learn the heart, and thoughts, and soul, of any man, before he holds the reins of governments, and administers the laws; but whoever ruling a whole city doth not follow the best counsels, but out of fear shuts his mouth, both heretofore was, and now shall be looked upon by me the basest of men; and whosoever esteems his friend more than his country, I by no means call him a friend. For I (let Jove know it, who sees all things for ever) cannot continue in silence, seeing a loss coming upon the citizens, instead of safety; nor would I ever accept of an enemy of my country for a friend to myself. For I am sensible of this, that our country is that which

reprove, give counsel in affairs of importance, comfort the sorrowful, &c. This Sophocles every where observes, for, where his Chorus consist of men, they are always supposed to be the most ancient. In Ajax, they consist of old Salaminian sailors; in Oedipus Tyrannus, of old Theban Priests and citizens; in Oed. Col. of ancient Athenians; in Philoctetes, of ancient sailors who followed Pyrrhus in his ship.

[i] *It is difficult to learn the heart.*] This is a proverbial speech, first spoke by one of the wise men, ἀρχὴ ἄνδρα δείξει, *i.e.* power will shew what a man is.

preserves us all, and sailing with it right, we make more friends; with these laws I will enlarge the city. And now I have decrees of kin to these to proclaim to the citizens concerning the children of Oedipus, to lay up Eteocles in a sepulchre, who fighting for his city perished, performing the noblest deeds in war, and cover up all things with him which are given to the noblest of the dead: and again, that his brother (Polynices, I say, who coming a fugitive to his country and kindred gods, would burn them with fire from the foundation, would feed upon the common blood, and reducing them to slavery, lead them away) should be forbid the city, that any should lay him in a sepulchre, nor lament for him, but that he be suffered to lie unburied, and to be beheld as a carcass miserably preyed upon, and torn by dogs and fowls of the air. Such is my sentence, nor shall the wicked ever have of me the honour of the just; but whosoever is benevolent to this city, in death and life he shall be alike honoured of me.

Cho. These things therefore please thee, O Creon, son of Menœceus, concerning him who was an enemy to this city, and the other who was its friend; it is every way in your power to establish laws concerning the dead, and as many of us as live.

Cre. Therefore you should now be overseers of the aforesaid commands.

Cho. Lay that burthen on some youth.

Cre. There are already keepers of the carcass.

Cho. What other thing is that you command besides?

Cre. Not to favour those who disobey the decree.

Cho. There is no such fool who desires to die.

Cre. That is, indeed, the reward of disobedience; but, through hope of gain, often men have been ruined.

ACT II. SCENE II.

Messenger, Creon, Chorus.

Mess. O king, I will not say that swift and hardly breathing I came with nimble pace; for I had many resistances of cares, turning myself round in the way for to return. My thinking soul spoke many things to me. Miserable man! whither goest thou? Whither wilt thou go and suffer punishment? Thou wretch, wilt thou still tarry? Creon will know these things from some other men, and then will you not have reason to repent? Revolving on these thoughts, being slow, I came along with leisure, and so the short way became long. In the end I came to this resolution, to come hither; but if I say nothing agreeable yet I will speak, relying on this hope, that I shall suffer nought but death.

Cre. What is it, from whence proceeds thy discouragement?

Mess. I will tell you all things that relate to myself, I neither did that deed, nor did I see who did it, nor justly should I fall into any damage.

Cre. You aim well, and palliate this business; you signify to shew something new.

Mess. Great dangers cause great fear.

Cre. Wilt thou not speak therefore, and afterwards go away freed?

Mess. Therefore I will inform thee, that somebody this past instant having buried the dead carcass, went away, and, sprinkling dry dust upon the body, performed all decent funeral rites.

Cre. What sayest thou? What man is he who dared to do these things?

Mess. I know not; for there was neither mark of spade there, or trench of shovel; the earth plain and untrodden, nor tracked by wheels, but he was some unmarked worker; and as the first watchman

of this day tells the story, [k] it was a surprising miracle to all. He was not quite interred, nor was there any tomb erected, but there was cast on him a little small dust, [l] as of one who avoided the pollution, no signs of beasts coming and tearing it, or of dog appeared; but ill words were heard among us, one keeper blamed another, and had they gone to blows, none was near to have prevented them, for every one seemed to be him that did it, though none was proved so, but denied he knew ought of it. [m] We stood ready to take up burning irons in our

[k] *It was a surprising miracle.*] The messenger who brings this news intends to amuse Creon, and make him think the action was something supernatural; and, therefore, that the gods condemned his sentence as impious, that he might either revoke it, or slacken his search for the authors of the sepulture. For it appears, by several passages in this play, that none of the Thebans favoured his decree; and, though he called a council on this occasion, it was not to consult with them whether the making of such a decree were convenient or not, but to inform them that he had actually resolved upon it; and, he being tyrannical in his government, they durst not oppose him, though willingly they would have done it. All this may be gathered from these places following compared together; Act III. Scene I. where Creon says to Hæmon, "Shall "the city tell me what I ought to order," with Act II. Scene IV. where Antigone says to Creon, "For fear of you they shut their "mouths." And this is the usual manner of tyrants, to seem to enact their decrees in conjunction with and by the advice of others, that they might appear just, when they are nothing less.

[l] *As of one who avoided the pollution.*] Among the ancients, it was reckoned a great crime for any to pass by a dead carcass which lay unburied and not to bury it, and they who were guilty of that crime were called Piaculares, or impious. Hor. lib. i. ode 28, introduceth the Manes of Archytas, who was cast away, thus cursing any sailor who should pass by and not perform due funeral rites to his body.

Debita jura vicesque superbæ
Te maneant ipsum, precibus non linquar inultis.

[m] *We stood ready to take up burning irons.*] It was an ancient custom for persons to swear to the truth of what they said, by throwing red hot iron wedges into the sea, after pronouncing many curses against themselves if they should break their vow, to

hands, to go through fire, and swear by the gods, that we neither interred the body, nor were confederates with him who first devised it, or who effected it. But, in the end, when they find out nothing more, one speaks, who caused all to bend their heads towards the ground for fear; we had nothing to answer again, nor knew well what else to do; and his counsel was, that deed must be disclosed to you, and not concealed; and this opinion soon prevailed, and lot obliged me, an unfortunate man, to undertake [n] that good work, and I am present unwillingly, with those that will not willingly receive me, for I know that none favours a messenger of ill news.

Cho. O king, my thoughts imagined once with myself whether that was not the work of the gods.

Cre. Cease, ere speaking you fill me with anger, and be found a fool, and old man too; you speak intollerable things, saying that the gods have any care concerning this dead body. Will they honour

signify thereby that the oath would remain inviolate as long as the iron should remain in the sea without swimming. It was thus Aristides bound himself and his soldiers to make their intended invasion upon Persia, after they had defeated the forces of Xerxes. Also, they had another way to clear themselves from the imputation of crimes, which was thus: the person accused crept upon his hands and knees through the fire, or held in his hands the μύδρος, or red hot iron, and those who were not guilty of the crime laid to their charge received no hurt by the fire. And this oath the Messenger tells Creon all the guards were ready to take, that they neither buried Polynices themselves, nor were any way privy to the action.

The Saxons of this land had a custom, not much differing from this, called the fiery ordeal. The manner of this test was thus: the person accused passed blindfold through plough-shares, red-hot, placed at unequal distances from each other. Emma, the mother of Edward the Confessor, passed through this *ordalium*, and so vindicated her honour from the scandal of adultery with Alwyn, Bishop of Winchester.

[n] *That good work.*] This is meant ironically.

him with burial as a benefactor who came to set on fire their pillared temples and offerings, and to lay waste their lands and laws? Dost thou see the gods honouring the wicked? It is not so. But, formerly, the citizens, scarce bearing these decrees, spoke against me, secretly shaking their heads, nor did they, as they ought, bend their crests under my yoke, so as to favour me. And I know well that some of them by rewards are induced to do these things, for there is no such evil ever sprung up among men as money; ° that lays waste cities, stirs up domestic strifes; that teaches and changes the good minds of men to betake themselves to base deeds, hath instructed men to practise frauds, and know the impiety of every act. But as many as hired by reward have consented to do this act, have done it in a time that they shall suffer the punishment due to their crimes; for, as I have a due reverence for Jove, know this well, (sworn, I say, to thee,) unless you shew the author of this sepulchre before my eyes, death alone shall not suffice for you, ere living and hanging up, you shall declare the authors of this affront, that you may know from whence gain ought to be got. And, hereafter, you may learn, that it is not good to get gain by everything, but by filthy gains you may see more damnified than enriched.

Mess. Do you permit me to speak anything; or shall I return, and go as I came?

Cre. Do you not know how troublesome your talk is?

° *That lays waste cities.*] Philip, king of Macedon, often found this true, of whom it was said, that not himself but his gold overcame Greece; and when, at a particular time, it was told him that a certain garrison was impregnable, he replied, cannot an ass laden with money enter into it. For

Χρυσὸς ἀνοίγει πάντα καὶ ἅΐδᾳ πύλας.
Money opens all things, even the gates of hell.

Mess. Are you bit in the ear or mind?

Cre. Why do you search out my grief, and where it lies?

Mess. He who did it torments your mind, but I your ears.

Cre. Woe is me! how, thou art all mere talk.

Mess. Did, therefore, I do that deed?

Cre. Aye, and by that didst betray thy life for money.

Mess. Woe is me! it is cruel, if it seems true, to suspect a thing that is false.

Cre. Palliate your crime with florid speech; but, if you will not shew me who did this thing, you shall say that gains unjustly got are dangerous.

Mess. May he by all means be found out. [*Apart.*] But, whether he be taken or not, (for fortune will determine that,) you shall not see me returning hither again; and now, preserved beyond my hope and thoughts, I owe the gods much thanks.

ACT II. SCENE III.

Strophe I.

Cho. There are many subtle things, but nothing more subtle than man; he traverses the hoary main in stormy winds by the ratling tumours of swoln sails, and pierces the supreme incorruptible land of the immortal gods, year after year returning to plow it with horse-kind.

Antistrophe II.

And skilful man, enclosing with his nets, takes the tribe of winged birds, wild beasts, and marine kind of fishes; and overcomes, by arts, the fierce beast that treads the mountains, and taking the hairy-necked horse, puts the yoke about his neck, and mountainous unruly bull.

Strophe II.

He hath learnt eloquence, noisy cavils, and quarrels about right of government, to avoid the injuries of rainy weather and of cold habitations; expert in all things, unskilled in nothing that will come, will only not introduce the means to escape death, but hath to escape dangerous diseases.

Antistrophe II.

Having arts beyond hope, and the power of doing the most ingenious acts, sometimes abandons himself to impiety, and sometimes conducts himself by the strictest rules of virtue. He is a noble citizen who observes his country's laws, but may he for ever be expelled who hath not the courage to do what justice requires; may he, I say, be ever banished hence, as the hated object of my soul's aversion, who is no better instructed.

I consider that great miracle, and how, seeing it, can I deny that this is Antigone. O miserable daughter of a miserable father, Oedipus! [*Antigone is brought in.*] What, therefore, do they bring thee in as a rebel to the king's laws, and having taken thee in thy imprudence?

Mess. This is she who did that deed; we took her burying him. But where is Creon?

Cho. In a fit time he comes out of the palace.

ACT II. SCENE IV.

Creon, Messenger, Chorus, Antigone.

Cre. What is it? what condign punishment hath happened?

Mess. My lord, there is nothing that men should forswear, the former thought falsifies the other; for, I swore that, at my leisure, I would come hither,

because of those threats with which I was disturbed: but unhoped-for joy hath no pleasure equal to it, and I come, according to the trust reposed in me, although forsworn, bringing this maid which was found adorning the sepulchre. Here there was no lot cast, this is all my own private gain, and belongs not to any other; and now, taking her yourself, my lord, judge and convict her as you will; but, for my part, you ought to free me from the least suspicion of having any share in this crime.

Cre. Dost thou bring her? How; from whence?

Mess. She buried the corpse.

Cre. Art thou in thy wits; or dost thou truly say what thou sayest?

Mess. I saw her burying that dead body whom you prohibited from burial; I speak things plain and clear.

Cre. How was she seen and found?

Mess. Thus was the case: when we were come back, having been threatened with grievous threats by you, brushing away all the dust which covered the carcass, and well uncovering the rotting body, we sat exposed to the wind on the highest hills, avoiding it lest it put forth an ill scent. One man provoked another with perpetual reproaches, if any one chanced to slacken his diligence: and thus the time was spent while the sun's splendid circle shone on high, diffusing heat all round, and there arose from the earth a whirlwind, a celestial raging tempest, fills the field, shaking all the leaves of the woods throughout the country, the whole sky was filled with dust, we closed our eyes to avoid it, but some god had almost taken away our senses. After some time, when this was past, the maid appears and bitterly cries out, with the shrill voice of a bird, who, when her young are flown, sees her nest deserted. And thus as she beholds the naked carcass, she laments, with sad complaints, and bitterly

cursed those who did that deed; by and by she bears dry dust in her hands, and from a vessel of an ingenious worker in brass, copiously adorns the carcass with sepulchral libations. We seeing come, and immediately catch her not at all dismayed; we argue with her concerning her former deeds; she was not backward to own any thing, but it was both bitter and pleasant to me: for that was most pleasant that I should be freed from evils; but bitter to bring my friends into mischief: but I prefer my own safety to all things.

Cre. Speak thou who bendest thy head to the ground; wilt thou confess, or else deny thou didst that fact.

Ant. I own I did, and do not deny it.

Cre. You may go wheresoever you will, free from all harm. [*To the Messenger.*] But do thou tell me, not tediously, but in few words, whether thou knewest not that these things were forbidden.

Ant. I knew; why not? For they were plainly forbid.

Cre. And dost thou then dare to transgress the laws?

Ant. It was not Jove, nor vengeance, companion of the gods below, who decreed those laws to men; nor did I think that your decrees could prevail so much, that, being only a mortal man, you could run down the unwritten, firm, and lawful, decrees of the gods; they are not of yesterday, but they for ever live; none knows from whence they came, nor will I, fearing the haughtiness of any man, suffer punishment of the gods for the violation of those laws. I knew that I should die (why not?) if you had not decreed it, and, if I die before my time, I'll count it gain; for whosoever lives as I do, in great evils, how will not he esteem it gain to die? So to me to enjoy that fate is no trouble; but if I suffered him a dead carcass to lie unburied, who is the son

of my own mother, for that I should grieve, not for the other. But if I seem to you to act foolishly, I owe my seeming folly to your foolish judgment in thinking so.

Cho. She declares herself the cruel offspring of a cruel father; she knows not how to submit to evils.

Cre. But know that fiercest minds submit most, that the strongest iron burnt, you may see broke and bruised, and with a small rein I have known the fiercest horses taught. It is not fit that he be of a lofty spirit who is a servant to others. She learnt well to act impiously, when she dared to transgress the established laws; but when she had done one injury, it is another crime to glory in what she had done, and laugh at it. Now I am no more a man, but she, if unpunished, takes all this freedom; but if she were born of our own sister, or of any nearer than domestic Jove is to us all, she and her sister shall not escape most cruel death; for I likewise accuse her to have contrived this burial. Call her forth, for I saw her just now raging, nor in her right senses; for those who contrive their crimes in darkness are commonly first betrayed by their own guilty mind; and truly I hate when any one taken would afterwards excuse the fault with fair words.

Ant. Wouldest thou do any thing more than kill me?

Cre. Nothing; for with your death I shall be satisfied.

Ant. What therefore wouldest thou? As none of your words please me, even so my words please not you; but how could I obtain greater glory than by entombing my own brother? That may be said to please all these, if fear did not tie their tongues. But tyranny, as in many other things it is happy, so likewise in this, that it is lawful for it to do and say as it will.

Cre. Dost thou alone of all the Thebans see this?

Ant. They see it too, but for fear of you they shut their mouths.

Cre. Dost thou not blush, if thou dissentest from them?

Ant. It is not base to revere my own relations.

Cre. And is not he your brother that lies under the earth?

Ant. Of the same father and mother.

Cre. Why, therefore, dost thou give honour to that impious wretch?

Ant. Even the other dead brother will not witness so.

Cre. Thou honourest him equal with that villain.

Ant. He was not his servant, but his brother, who fell.

Cre. Truly, wasting the land, while the other defended it.

Ant. But death itself requires these laws.

Cre. But a good man should not share like fate with a bad one.

Ant. Who can say but the gods below approve this deed?

Cre. An enemy is no friend, though dead.

Ant. I was not born to hate with others, but love.

Cre. When thou shalt descend below, if they must be beloved, love them who are there; but, while I live, a woman shall not reign.

Cho. Ismene is before the gates, a cloud hangs on her eye-brows, and a flood of tears, shed for her sister deforms her, dying her beauteous cheeks.

ACT II. SCENE V.

Creon, Ismene, Antigone, Chorus.

Cre. Ha! Traitress, are you there? You, who at home, as a venomous serpent let loose, secretly

has fed upon my vitals. I did not understand before that I brought up two such vile opposers of my lawful power. Speak, tell me, will you own that you partook of this sepulture, or would you swear you did not know of it?

Ism. If she agrees thereto, I partake thereof, and bear part of the guilt.

Ant. But justice will not suffer that, since you neither would, nor did I communicate with you in that act.

Ism. But I am not so ashamed of your crime, that I will not make myself a companion in your sufferings.

Ant. Whose that deed is, Pluto and the gods below can witness. I favour not a lover of words.

Ism. O sister, do not dishonour me by not permitting me to die with you, that I may sanctify myself by my death.

Ant. Neither should you die with me, nor make that your own act, which you had no hand in. It shall suffice I die myself.

Ism. And what life will be delightful to me, bereaved of you?

Ant. Ask Creon, you are one who hath a respect for him.

Ism. Why dost thou torment me while thou gainest no advantage to thyself thereby?

Ant. I am grieved, though I laugh at thee.

Ism. In what other thing can I assist you?

Ant. Save yourself, I do not envy your escape.

Ism. Woe is me, a wretch!

Ant. You have chose to live, I to die.

Ism. But not according to my words which I had yet to speak.

Ant. Thou thoughtest thyself wise in these words, but I in these think myself so.

Ism. But the fault is equal to us both.

Ant. Be confident, you shall live. I struggled

long with life, and now I give it up to benefit the dead.

Cre. One of these girls seems mad but now; but the other, ever since she was born was so.

Ism. The minds, my lord, of wicked persons, remain not wicked, but are converted.

Cre. But thy mind remains wicked, since, with a wicked woman, you have chosen to act wicked deeds.

Ism. And what to me were desirable in life without her?

Cre. Do you not that regard; for she is no more.

Ism. Will you kill the spouse of your son?

Cre. Children may be got of others.

Ism. But they agreed not on such conditions.

Cre. I hate my children should marry wicked wives.

Ant. ° O dear Hæmon, how thy father slights thee!

Cre. You grieve much, and your nuptials are disturbed.

Ism. Will you deprive your son of her?

Cre. The grave will end those nuptials.

Ism. It is, it seems, decreed that she must die.

Cre. And thou, likewise, cause no delays, but receive her into the palace, ye maids; from henceforth they shall not be set free, for even the daring fly, when they see approaching death.

° *O dear Hæmon, how thy father slights thee.*] This tenderness of Antigone for Hæmon is not at all unworthy her character, nor the least breach of modesty; for, though she was not married to him, yet she was betrothed, which, among the ancients, was almost as great an engagement as marriage.

ACT II. SCENE VI.

Chorus.

Strophe I.

Cho. Happy are they whose lives do taste no evil; for those upon whose family the gods bring afflictions, no kind of ill doth fail coming upon the last of their whole offspring. As the waves of the sea, when the sad Thracian winds exert their rage against the liquid element, roll out of the deep abyss a black heap of muddy sand, and the beaten shores resound.

Antistrophe I.

I see the ancient evils of the falling house of Labdacus renewed again, nor doth the suffering of one race free the other from the anger of the gods, which still pursues them to destruction. One glorious branch sprang from the ancient stock in the house of Oedipus, and the cruel dust of the gods below cuts her down, the folly of her words, and fury of her mind.

Strophe II.

O, Jove! what man by his pride can restrain thy power, whom no sleep doth seize, which brings old age on all things, nor perpetual succeeding months affect? An ever-living prince thou art, yet never old, who possessest bright Olympus. Past, present, and to come, are all with thee alike; [p] this law by

[p] *This law by no means.*] That law which the Fates have decreed, from all eternity, concerning Jove, by which he is immortal and incorruptible, king of heaven, by no means reaches mortals; that they should be χωρὶς καὶ ἐκτὸς ἄτης, free from sufferings: but, on the contrary, they are subject to mortality and many other evils.

no means extends to mortals, that it should free them altogether from evils.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Hope, a help to many men, deceitful to the vain desires of others, ensnares him who thinks himself secure, before he runs into danger. A famous proverb appears to have been wisely spoken, That what is evil will seem good to him whose mind God leads to that evil from which he is but a short while preserved.

But Hæmon, the younger of your children, comes, lamenting the fate of his espoused Antigone, grieving to be defrauded of his bride.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Creon, Hæmon, Chorus.

Cre. We shall soon know better than any prophet. My son, is it so, that, hearing the final sentence of your spouse, you are come in anger with your father? Are we not, in whatsoever we do, acceptable to thee?

Hæm. O, father, I am yours, and you govern by a right judgment, and which I will follow. It is fit that no marriage should be esteemed greater to me than you governing well.

Cre. For so, my child, it is fit you think in your mind that all things are of less esteem than your father's will. It is for this men pray for children; that, begetting them, they may have them obedient in their houses, that they may repay their enemy with evil, and honour their friend equal with their father. But whosoever begets unprofitable children, what else can you say he doth, but beget sorrows for himself, and much cause of laughter for his

enemies? Do not, therefore, my son, sacrifice your reason to the love of a woman, knowing what a cold reception it is to lie within the arms of a wicked woman. What more dangerous wound than what is given by a false friend? Therefore, as one who spits upon his hated foe, despise her, and suffer the girl to marry some among the dead. Since I have plainly caught her the only rebel of all the city, I will not prove myself a traitor to it, but will kill her, and therein let her implore Jove, the guardian of kindred; for, if I suffer disorders to go unpunished in my own relations, much more I should in strangers. He that is just among his own relations will shew himself just to the city; but whosoever violates the laws, and thinks to order those in power, it is impossible that he should ever get praise of me: but whom the city hath placed in power, it is fit to hear him in small things or in great, just or unjust, and he who doth, I am confident, would govern and obey well, and, being placed in the storms of war, would remain a good ally. For there is no greater evil than disobedience; it destroys cities, it sets houses at strife, and in war it puts the brave commander to flight. But obedience preserves many subjects. So governments are to be defended by good men, and by no means to be subjected by a woman; for it is better, if it must be, to fall by a man than to be called the subjects of women.

Cho. Unless, through age, we are deprived of sense, you seem to discourse well upon this subject.

Hæm. O, father, the gods give men a rational mind, which is the most excellent of all riches; but, that you say not these things right, I neither can nor know how to judge; for it may be that this may seem well to another, but your interest ought to be my care, in whatsoever is said or done concerning you, and when you are reproached your eye is terrible to the vulgar people, if they speak

words which are contrary to your will. But I, in secret, can hear how the city laments this maid, who, of all women, does most unworthily and basely die for the most noble deeds; who suffered not her own brother, fallen in fight, lying unburied, to be destroyed by devouring dogs or birds. Is not this worthy to obtain golden honour? And this is the report which is secretly spread abroad; but to me, my father, there is no more precious treasure than your prosperity. What greater glory can there be to children than a prosperous father; or to fathers than their prosperous children? But do not appropriate to yourself that custom to say, that that which you decree is only right and nothing else, for he who only thinks himself wise, or to have a tongue and understanding excelling all others, commonly meets contempt. But it is not unworthy a wise man to learn many things, and not contend over much. Thou seest at the flowing brooks how many trees do bend and save their boughs; but those that resist are torn up by the roots. So the pilot of a ship who sails along nor submits to the winds, the ship turned upside down, and seats overthrown, is it possible that he should any longer sail? But thou moderate thy rage, and revoke thy sentence; for, if I have any understanding, being a youth, [r] I say

[r] *I say that every man fraught with native wisdom.*] There is a passage in Hesiod which better explains this:

Κεῖνος μὲν πανάριστος ὃς αὐτὸς πάντα νοήσει,
Φρασσάμενος, τά κ' ἔπειτα καὶ ἐς τέλος εἰσὶν ἀμείνω.
Ἐσθλὸς δ' αὖ κἀκεῖνος ὃς εὖ εἰπόντι πίθηται.
Ὃς δέ κε μήτ' αὐτὸς νοέῃ, μήτ' ἄλλου ἀκούων
Ἐν θυμῷ βάλληται, ὁ δ' αὖ ἀχρήϊος ἀνήρ.

The best is he whom Nature has made wise,
And he is next, to whom, when she denies
Her gifts, will hear what prudent men advise.
But, for that fool, he scarce is fit to live,
Who won't obey what counsel others give.

that every man fraught with native wisdom much exceeds others; but he that is not, (since every man is not so,) merits the second praise, who listens to those that give good counsel.

Cho. My lord, it is fit, if he speaks to the purpose, you should hear him; and you, Hæmon, your father likewise; for it is well spoke on both sides.

Cre. At these years must we learn wisdom from one so young?

Hæm. It is nothing unjust; though I am a young man, it is fit you consider the business, not my age.

Cre. The business is to honour those who act basely.

Hæm. I would not desire you to honour the wicked.

Cre. Is she not wicked?

Hæm. The people of Thebes say not so.

Cre. Shall the city tell me what I ought to order?

Hæm. See how you have spoken like a very youth.

Cre. Must any other than I govern this land?

Hæm. It is no city which belongs to one man.

Cre. Is the city not reckoned to belong to the king?

Hæm. You would govern well a desert country.

Cre. He, it seems, contends for this woman.

Hæm. If you are a woman; for my care is for you.

Cre. Vile youth, thus to oppose his father!

Hæm. I see you are to blame in acting unjustly.

Cre. Do I offend by honouring the laws of the kingdom?

Hæm. You honour them not, but tread down the honours of the gods.

To the same purpose, Livy, in his book, *De Urbe condita. Minutius convocatis militibus; sæpe ego (inquit) audivi, milites, eum primum esse virum qui ipse consulat quid in rem sit. Secundum, eum qui bene monenti obediat: qui nec ipse consulere, nec alteri parere scit, eum extremi ingenii esse.*

Cre. Vile youth, thus to be captivated by a woman!

Hæm. You shall not find me the villain you speak of.

Cre. This your whole discourse is for her.

Hæm. For you and the gods below.

Cre. You shall not marry her alive.

Hæm. And must she die? Then, dying, she will kill somebody.

Cre. Art thou become so bold as to threaten?

Hæm. What, threatening to answer to vain words?

Cre. With tears thou shalt know how vain thy mind is.

Hæm. Unless you were my father, I would say you were not wise.

Cre. Woman's slave, prate not to me.

Hæm. You would speak and not hear my answer.

Cre. True; but, by Olympus, know you shall not have reason to rejoice reviling me thus with reproaches. Go, bring that hated thing, that, before our eyes, she may die in the presence of her spouse.

Hæm. Think not so, she shall never die in my presence; you shall not see my face with those eyes. You may be mad among which of your friends you will. [*Exit Hæmon.*

ACT III. SCENE II.

Chorus, Creon.

Cho. My lord, the man is gone swiftly away in anger; such a mind in grief is fierce.

Cre. Let him do or think more than is fit for man, he shall never free those girls from death.

Cho. Dost thou think to kill them both?

Cre. Not her who touched him not; you speak well.

Cho. What death will you put her to?

Cre. Leading her where is a way deserted of all men, I'll hide her alive in a subterraneous cave, putting so much food as shall serve her only as a purification, that the city may escape pollution; there, beseeching Pluto, whom, of all the gods, alone she worships, she shall obtain freedom from death, or then she shall know that it is a superfluous work to worship the gods below.

ACT III. SCENE III

Antistrophica Strophe.

Cho. [s] Invincible love! love, [t] who hast riches for thy object, who sleepest in the soft cheeks of a young maid! thou traversest the seas and country villages; none of the immortal gods is able to escape thee, or mortal men; whoever hath thee is mad.

Antistrophe.

[u] Thou seducest the minds of unjust men to injury; thou hast raised that kindred quarrel; for the powerful love of the eye-brows of a young virgin fit for marriage, companion of those invested with powers and administration of great laws, overcomes Hæmon, and Venus, the invincible goddess, plays upon him.

[s] *Invincible love.*] This song of the Chorus is on the great power of love, which, in this instance, hath set Hæmon and his father at strife.

[t] *Who hast riches for they object.*] But then it is more properly called covetousness.

[u] *Thou seducest the minds of unjust men to commit injuries.*] This was the effect which it had upon Hercules, who, purely for the love of Iole, took Oechalia.

ANAPÆSTI.

Now, seeing this, myself am forced to transgress the laws, and cannot stop fountains of tears, when I see Antigone going to her everlasting bed.

[*Seeing Antigone enter.*

ACT III. SCENE IV.

Chorus, Antigone.

ANTISTROPHICA STROPHE I.

Ant. You see me, citizens of my father's country, going my last journey, seeing the light of the sun the last time, and no more to behold it; but the grave, which covers all, brings me to the shore of Acheron, no partaker of Hymen's rites; nor is there any bridal hymn sung to celebrate my nuptials, but I am given in marriage to Acheron.

Cho. Therefore, glorious, and having praise, you shall descend to the cave of the dead, untouched by consuming diseases, without receiving wounds of the sword, but free, alive, and by yourself, you shall descend into the grave.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Ant. [x] I have heard that the miserable Phrygian,

[x] *I have heard that the miserable Phrygian.*] Antigone comforts herself, under her affliction, by the example of Niobe. She was daughter of Tantalus, king of Phrygia, and wife of Amphion, king of Thebes, who, for her arrogant language to Latona, was, by Apollo and Diana, shot to death and turned into a rock, according to Ausonius, Epitaph 27.

Bis septem natis genitrix læta atque superba,
Tot duxi mater funera quot genui.
Nec satis hoc divis; duro circumdata Saxo
Amisi humani corporis effigiem.

the daughter of Tantalus, perished at the top of Sipylus, whom, as the ivy twines her arms about the elm, the arms of the rock enfold; and, as the report of men goes, she is always exposed to the rain, nor doth the snow forsake her, but stains her neck beneath her ever-weeping eye-brows. Woe is me! fortune makes me submit like her.

ANAPÆSTI.

Cho. But she was a goddess, and born of a god; but we are mortals, and born of mortals; it is a noble thing to hear that you have shared the same fate with the goddess, now living, but art to die.

STROPHE II.

Ant. Woe is me! I am laughed at. Why, by the gods of my father, do you injure me, not yet dead, but still alive? O city, and wealthy men of the city! O Dircæan fountain, and forest of famous Thebes! I call you all to witness, how unlamented of my friends, by what laws I come to this dug prison. O wretch! who, neither alive nor dead, am an inhabitant neither of the living nor the dead.

Cho. Arrived at the highest degree of boldness, thou art fallen to the lowest and worst of punishments. O princess, thou still maintainest thy father's conflict.

ATISTROPHE II.

Ant. Thou hast touched my bitterest cares, the

My fourteen children made me haughty grow,
But soon for each a funeral I prepar'd:
And, turn'd by gods, relentless, to a stone,
I mourn my human shape for ever lost.

Agathius writes her epitaph thus:

Ὁ τύμβος ὅτος ἔνδον οὐκ ἔχει νέκυν,
Ὁ νεκρὸς ὅτος ἔκτος οὐκ ἔχει τάφον.

This tomb within no carcass doth contain,
And this dead corse doth unentomb'd remain.

famous misery of my father, and the misfortunes which befel the noble descendants of Labdacus. O maternal crimes and kindred, conjunction of my father and miserable mother, from whom I am a wretched woman born, to them I go, an accursed unmarried inhabitant. O brother, who hast been most unfortunate in marriage, for thy death hath been fatal to me yet alive.

Cho. To act piously is some piety, but yet let power be to whom power belongs, it is not to be transgressed; but indignation, which you of Creon drew voluntarily upon yourself, hath destroyed you.

Ant. Unlamented, without friend, an unmarried miserable princess, I am lead to my death; nor is it longer lawful for me, a wretch, to behold that sacred light of the sun; none of my friends mourn my unlamented fate!

ACT III. SCENE V.

Creon, Chorus, Antigone.

Cre. But, knowest thou not, none will cease mournings and lamentations before death, if that liberty be granted. Will you not lead her with all speed away, and, shutting her up in a covered tomb, as I said, leave her alone, there let her die, or lie covered alive under that roof? We are guiltless of the blood of this maid; but she shall be deprived of cohabitation with us above.

Ant. O tomb, hard marriage-bed! O perpetual deep habitation! Whither I go to my friends, whereof, a great number having perished, Proserpine hath received among the dead; whereof I, the last and worst, at length descend, before the portion of my life is finished; but, since I must go, I nourish myself much with hopes, that I shall go

beloved of my father; of thee, mother, beloved; beloved of thee, dear brother; since, with my own hand, I washed and adorned you, and gave you funeral obsequies. And now, by adorning your body, Polynices, I earn these rewards; and I have honoured you with those who judged right. Nor, were I the mother of children, and if my husband were dead, had I undertaken this labour against a public edict. But by what law do I say this? why, thus, my husband being dead, another might be had, and a child of another husband; but if I am deprived of him, my mother and father lying in the grave, it is impossible that another brother should be born to me; and, by that law, preferring you, I thought fit to offend against Creon, and to dare terrible things, sweet brother. And now, taking me, he leads me away by the hands, without Hymen's rites or wedding, nor have I had the happiness to educate a child, but here, deserted of my friends, unfortunate, alive, I descend into the dark grave of the dead. What law of the gods transgressing? why should I, a wretch, look to the gods? whom should I implore for my assistants, since, by acting piously, I have purchased dishonour; but if this my punishment be acceptable with the gods, if I offend, I would forgive the authors of my sufferings; but, if they offend, let them not suffer other evils than they unjustly bring on me.

Anapæsti.

Cho. Still the same violence of the storms of her soul torments her.

Cre. Therefore, they that lead her shall feel the terrible effects of my rage for their slowness.

Ant. Woe is me! the sentence of immediate death is passed.

Cre. I nothing comfort you that it will not be executed.

Ant. O my father's city of Thebes, and the gods of my fathers, I am lead away, and am no more! Behold, ye princes of Thebes! the only queen left, what I suffer, and from whom, acting a pious deed.

Antistrophica Strophe I.

Cho. [y] The body of Danae endured to change celestial light for darkness; bound by a brazen chain, and in a sepulchral bed inclosed, she was overcome by cruel fate. But she was noble by descent, and kept Jove's golden offspring in her womb; but fatal power is cruel, for neither Mars, nor tower, nor ships beaten by the waves, escape it.

Antistrophe I.

[z] The angry son of Dryas, king of the Thracians, for his reproachful speeches, was bound by Bacchus to a rock with a chain, and so he loses his cruel florid madness in abusing the god. With reproachful language he made the raging women cease, put out [a] the fire of Bacchus, and disturbed the muses lovers of palaces.

[y] *The body of Danae.*] She was daughter of Acrisius, king of the Argives, who, being warned by an oracle that he should be slain by his grandchild, kept Danae up from the sight of men; but Prœtus, brother of Acrisius, first corrupted her keepers with gold, and then deflowered Danae. The fable is, that Jupiter came to her through the tiles in a shower of gold.

[z] *The angry son of Dryas.*] *i.e.* Lycurgus, king of Thrace, who, contemning the rites of Bacchus, was, according to the Poets, bound by him and cast down a precipice, by which his brains were dashed out. Others say that he was shut into a den, and so starved to death; here it is said that he was bound to a rock; but the truth is, that, seeing his subjects commit many irregularities, through wine, he caused all the vines to be rooted up; whence they fabulized, that, being turned into madness by Bacchus, he cut off his own legs with a pruning-hook.

The Poet doth not compare Danae and Lycurgus to Antigone in their crimes but in their sufferings.

[a] *The fire of Bacchus.*] The ancients supposed Bacchus always among the fire, to denote the strong effects of wine. There

Strophe II.

[b] The shores of Bosphorus, near the Cyanean rocks, and divided sea, and [c] Thracian Salmydessus, and neighbouring Mars, beheld the cruel wound given to the two sons of Phineus, inhumanly blinded by his fierce wife, in the wretched orbs of their eyes, not cut with swords, but with her bloody hands and the points of bodkins.

Antistrophe II.

The wretches dying deplored the sad sufferings of their mother unhappily born; she was a descendant of noble Erechtheus brought up in distant caves among her father's storms, daughter of Boreas, equal to a horse in swiftness on the high mountains, and daughter of the gods, but the Fates overtook her.

was a festival kept in honour to him, at Pellene, in Achaia, by the name of Bacchus, λαμπτὴρ, Bacchus, the torch-bearer, and the festival was called λαμπτηρία ἑορτή. This solemnity was in the night, and the worshippers went to the temple of Bacchus with torches in their hands.

[b] *The shores of Bosphorus, near.*] The Cyaneæ were two islands, or rather rocks, near the Thracian Bosphorus, and divided the sea, hence, διδύμη θάλασσα.

[c] *Thracian Salmydessus.*] A river of the Thracians, near which was a Temple of Mars, whence ἀἰχμπόλις Ἄρης, neighbouring Mars. The sense is, all these places beheld the wound, or near these places the wound was given to the two brothers Plexippus and Pandion, by Cleopatra: or, rather, by Phineus to his own two sons. The story is as follows: Boreas married Orithyia, daughter of Erechtheus, King of Athens, by whom he had Zetes, Calais, and Cleopatra; the last of these Phineus married, by whom he had Plexippus and Pandion, according to others, Gerumbas and Spondus. After her he married Ideæ, daughter of Dardanus, according to others, Idothæa, sister of Cadmus, who conspired against and murdered the sons of Cleopatra. Others say that, while Cleopatra was alive, he married Idæa, at which the former, enraged, blinded her own children. But most agree that Phineus, through the false accusation of their step-mother, blinded his children by his former wife, for which himself was blinded by Jove, and tormented by the Harpies.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Tiresias led by a Boy, Creon, Chorus.

Tir. [d] Princes of Thebes, we come the common way two seeing by one, for blind men go the same way with a leader.

Cre. What news is this thou bringest?

Tir. I will tell thee, and do thou listen to the prophet.

Cre. Did I ever before oppose your will?

Tir. Therefore rightly do you rule this city.

Cre. I must own your assistance.

Tir. Be wise then now in the very precipice of fate.

Cre. What is it? How I dread your words?

Tir. You shall know when you hear the signs of my art. [e] Sitting in my ancient hallowed seat of divination, where all kinds of birds flocked to me, I heard an unknown voice of birds crying with an ill fury, uninterpretable, and tearing one another with bloody claws: I knew it, for the noise of their wings was not uncertain. Presently, fearing, I endeavoured to offer sacrifices on the flaming altars, but the fire shone not from the sacrifices, but in the ashes the flame smothered, a cloud of smoke arose, the galls were cast up and spread abroad, the

[d] *Princes of Thebes.*] The Scholiast observes here, that not only kings, but likewise honourable persons and wealthy citizens, were called ἄναχτες or κοιρανίδαι. The reason of which is to be seen in our notes upon Oedipus Tyrannus, Act iv. note [b].

[e] *Sitting in my ancient hallowed seat.*] The Grecian Augurs had a place appointed on purpose for them, called by the general name of θᾶκος and θῶκος, a seat, but more properly οἰωνιστήριον, and had power to assemble the birds from all places when they had occasion to use them. The Scholiast upon Euripides says, they used to carry with them a writing table, in which they wrote the names and flights of the birds, with other things belonging thereto, lest any circumstance should slip out of their memory.

[f] thighs lay spread without their wonted fat. These things I learned from the boy, that the [g] signs of certain auguries were lost; for he is a guide to me, and I to others. These things the city suffers for your sentence; for our altars and our hearths are defiled, being quite full of the food of birds and dogs that feed on the unhappy son of Oedipus, who was slain, nor did the gods yet receive our supplications or flame of the thighs, nor the bird sound lucky cries, when he had fed on the fat of human blood. Consider these things, son; it is common to all men to offend; but after he hath offended he is no inconsiderate or unhappy man, who, having

[f] *The thighs lay spread without their wonted fat.*] The particular parts of the sacrifice which belonged to the gods were called μηροὶ, and these they covered with fat, called in Greek πιμελὴ, or κνίσση, to the end they might consume all together in a flame; for they concluded that their sacrifice was not accepted by the gods unless all was burnt. Thus we find them doing in Homer, Illiad. α. v. 459.

——————— καὶ ἔσφαξαν, καὶ ἔδειραν,
Μηρούς τ' ἐξέταμον, κάλα τε κνίσσ' ἐκάλυψαν.

The μηροὶ were appropriated to the gods, because says Eustathius, τὸ λυσιτελεῖν τοῖς ζώοις εἰς βαδεσίν τε καὶ γένεσιν.

[g] *The signs of certain auguries were lost.*] Tiresias finding that the omens given by the birds were unfortunate, tries another way of divination, called Πυρομαντεία, *i. e.* divination by fire, but with as little success, for still the signs appeared to portend impending mischief. For (as Dr. Potter tells us) the good signs were such as these, if the flames immediately took hold of, and consumed the victim, seizing at once all the parts of it; on which account they usually prepared τὰ φρύγανα, dry sticks, which would easily take fire. Also if the flame was bright and pure, and without noise and smoke; if the sparks tended upward in the form of a pyramid; if the fire went not out till all was reduced to ashes: contrary signs were, when it was kindled with difficulty, when the flame was divided, when it did not immediately spread itself over all the parts of the victim, but crept along, consumed by little and little; when instead of ascending in a straight line it whirled round, turned sideways or downwards, was black, cast forth smoke, &c.

fallen into evils, seeks a remedy, nor is unmoved; for obstinacy is owing to folly: but give place to the dead, nor vent your rage against a dead man. What courage is it to kill a man already killed? I in benevolence to thee advise, for 'tis a most delightful thing to learn of him who talks well, if he advises what is advantageous.

Cre. Old man, I know I am the scope of all your aims, for even the prophets are corrupted against me by this family; long have they borne me ill, and rated my person at no value. But make what gains of them you will; be bribed by [h] Sardine amber and Indian gold, but you shall never lay him in his tomb, nor if the eagles snatch and carry him to the throne of Jove: nor I, as fearing that pollution, will permit to bury him, for I know well that no man can pollute the gods; but the gravest of men fall many and great falls, when they speak gracefully many base speeches for the sake of gain.

Tir. But doth any man know or think this?

Cre. What is this you speak of, which all men know?

Tir. How much is prudence the best of all riches?

Cre. And how much is to be unwise the worst of evils?

Tir. And indeed thou art infected with that distemper.

Cre. I will not contradict a prophet.

Tir. But you do, in saying that I prophecy falsely.

Cre. All the kindred of the prophets are lovers of gold.

Tir. That is the manner of kings, they love filthy lucre.

[h] *Sardine amber.*] *Gr.* Σάρδεων ἤλεκτρον. Sardis is a rich country of Lydia, where Crœsus once reigned; it is near Pactolus, and abounded with precious metal, called electrum, a mixture of gold and silver, which they drew out of the mines with winged ants.

Cre. But do you know what you say when you name kings?

Tir. I know, for through me you have preserved this city.

Cre. You are a wise prophet, but love to act unjustly.

Tir. You command me to speak things not to be mentioned.

Cre. Mention what you will, so you do not speak for gain.

Tir. So I seem to do as to your part.

Cre. But you shall not make your gains of me, I am not of so easy a temper.

Tir. But know well there shall not be finished many courses of the sun, ere yourself shall expiate those that are dead with one of your own sons, for which you have cast one down, and dishonourably shut her alive into a tomb. Thou hast here [i] a body kept

[i] *A body, kept from the infernal gods, profaned.*] This saying is founded upon a superstition of the ancients, who supposed that the manes of those who lay unburied wandered upon the earth one hundred years, as appears from Virgil, Æneid. vi. v. 325.

Hæc omnis quam cernis, inops, inhumataque turba est:
Portitor ille Charon: hi, quos vehit unda, sepulti.
Nec ripas datur horrendas, nec rauca fluenta
Transportare priùs, quàm sedibus ossa quiérunt.
Centum errant annos, volitantque hæc littora circum:
Tum demum admissi stagna exoptata revisunt.

Alex. ab Alex. tells us, that at Tarentum, a town in Magna Græcia, there were Ludi Seculares, games kept every hundred years, to appease the manes, according to a precept in the Sibylline books: and farther adds, that it was reckoned a lawful sepulture, which was done by sprinkling dust three times on the body, with some prayers to the infernal gods. It was not therefore without reason that Tiresias, who was of this persuasion, should charge Creon with keeping the manes of Polynices from his desired Elysium and conversation with the infernal spirits. Virgil, Æneid vi. v. 365. Palinurus lying unburied is supposed to speak thus to Æneas:

Eripe me his, invicte, malis; aut tu mihi terram
Injice: namque potes.

from the infernal gods, prophaned, nor celebrated with funeral obsequies, which neither concerns you nor the gods above. But these actions are the effects of your violence, of which the late revengers lie concealed below, and the furies, daughters of the gods, so that your crimes will meet with their deserved punishment. Consider, if corrupted by gold I speak these things; for there will appear in a little time tribulations, lamentations of husbands and wives in your palace, all hostile cities rising tumultuously, which the dogs have polluted with torn limbs, or beasts or winged fowls, bearing filthy odours to the altars of their city. And these strong darts have I as an archer launched out against thy angry heart, whose violence you shall not escape. Thou, O boy, lead me home, that he may exercise his rage on younger people; know how to keep a stiller tongue, and ever be of a better mind than now he is.

[*Tiresias is led off.*

ACT IV. SCENE II.

Chorus, Creon.

Cho. O king, he is gone, after having prophesied sad things; for I know that since the time that I from black hair was covered with white, he never prophesied a falsehood to the city.

Cre. I know it myself, and am disturbed in mind. It is sad to submit, and if I oppose, I am in danger to suffer for it.

Cho. O Creon, good counsel now is necessary.

Cre. Tell me what is convenient to be done, and I shall obey.

For this reason the greatest of all imprecations was, that a person might ἄταφος ἐκπίπλειν χθονὸς, *i. e.* lie unburied on the earth.

Cho. Go and set free the girl from the covered vault, and honour the dead with a sepulchre.

Cre. Is this what you approve of? Do you think fit I comply?

Cho. As soon as possible, for the swift furies of the gods pursue the ill-minded.

Cre. Woe is me! I scarce can quit my resolution, yet I will, for there is no resistance against necessity.

Cho. Do it yourself, command not others.

Cre. I go as swift as I can; but you, servants, who are present and absent, taking axes in your hands, go unto the tomb's top; but I (for my mind is altered) bound her myself, and will set her free: for I fear lest it should be best, while we live, to preserve the established laws.

Strophe I.

Cho. Bacchus, the glory of Cadmean Semele, and son of thundering Jove, who rulest famous Italy, and presidest over the [k] Eleusinian mysteries, common to all, in the fields of Ceres; Bacchus, who inhabitest Thebes, the metropolis of the Bacchanals, by the flowing streams of Ismenus, and the seed of the fierce dragon.

Antistrophe I.

[l] To thee sacrifices are performed on the rock Parnassus, where the [m] Corycian nymphs of Bacchus walk, and the fountain of Castalia flows: the banks

[k] *Eleusinian mysteries common to all.*] Because people assembled from all countries to attend at the mysteries of Ceres in Eleusis.

[l] *To thee sacrifices, &c.*] Literally it is, thee on the double headed rock the splendid flame beheld; for there were two tops of Parnassus; and one, called Nyssa, was sacred to Bacchus.

[m] *Corycian nymphs.*] The muses so called, from Corycium, a cave at the top of mount Corycus, in Cilicia, dedicated to the muses: there was also another Corycium at the foot of Parnassus; whence they are called Parnassides, or Coryciæ Nymphæ.

of ivy of the [n] mountains of Nyssa, [o] and green forest, abounding with grapes, celebrate thee with sweet melodious songs, the governor of the Theban city.

Strophe II.

Which thou honourest above all the cities with thy mother Semele, who was struck with thunder; and now, as the whole city labours under a violent disease, come to our assistance, upon famous Parnassus, or the [p] sonorous shore.

Antistrophe II.

Thou [q] leader of the Bacchanals, who sparkling torches bearest, and [r] overseer of nightly clamours, son of Jove, appear with [s] your Naxian raging girls, who, raging by you all night in choirs, celebrate you, the governor Iacchus.

[n] *Mountains of Nyssa.*] There was a city in Ethiopia called Nyssa, near which was a mountain where Bacchus was worshipped; there were also several other Nyssas.

[o] *And green forest.*] *Gr.* χλωρά τ' ἀλλὰ, green bank. In both Eubœa and Parnassus there were vines which in the morning produced fresh bunches of grapes, at noon they grew bitter, and in the evening they were fit to be gathered. Either of them may be here understood.

[p] *Sonorous shore.*] By reason of the waves dashing against it; the Bœotian or Sicilian shores.

[q] *Thou leader, &c.*] Literally, leader of the fire-blowing-stars. He was worshipped by the name of Ætherius and Nuctor, but we are more justly to understand here by πῦρ πνεόντων ἀστέρων, the lamps which the raging women carried in the night, when they officiated in the sacred rites of Bacchus.

[r] *Overseer of nightly clamours.*] *i. e.* Which the raging women made in these rites.

[s] *Naxian raging girls.*] Naxos, or Naxia, was an island in the Ægean sea, where Bacchus was worshipped, called Strongyle, and afterwards Dia: there was said to have been a fountain in it which ran wine.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Messenger, Chorus.

Mess. Ye citizens of Thebes, the seat of Amphion, I see not what kind of human life I can praise or blame: [t] fortune raises up and throws down, makes one fortunate, and another miserable: there is no prophet skilled in foretelling those things which will happen to man. Creon was happy as once it seemed to me; he having preserved this Cadmean land from enemies, and possessing the whole government thereof, governed it flourishing, with a happy offspring. Now all is past; for, when men lose their pleasure, I reckon not that such do live, but count them breathing dead carcasses: be rich if thou wilt at home, and possess a government; but, if joy be absent from all this, all other things the world can afford are vain, as clouds of smoak in comparison of real felicity.

[t] *Fortune raises up.*] Hor. lib. i. od. 35.

O Diva, gratum quæ regis Antium,
Præsens vel imo tollere de gradu
Mortale Corpus, vel superbos
Vertere funeribus triumphos.

The messenger here tells the misfortune of Creon's house, as an instance of this truth. The ancients supposed Fortune to be a goddess, and that she presided over all human affairs; therefore they built her temples, and persons of all ranks and stations prayed to her for her favour. See in Pind. Olymp. od. xii.

Σῶτειρα τύχα, τὶν γὰρ ἐν πόντῳ κυβερνῶνται θοαὶ νάες.
Ἔν χέρσῳ τε λαιψηροὶ πόλεμοι, κ' ἀγοραί
Βελαφόροι.

O Fortune, the preserver of mankind, the nimble ships in the sea are governed by thee; in the earth likewise success of war and councils on thee depends. She had in particular a famous temple at Antium, a sea-port town of Latium, and metropolis of the Volsci.

But with more justice and piety the Psalmist ascribes this power to the most High, which they thought belonged to her, who is a name and nothing else. Psalm lxxv.

Cho. But what misfortune of the king's is this you come to relate?

Mess. They are dead, but those that live are the cause of their death.

Cho. Who is dead? Who is slain? Speak, messenger.

Mess. Hæmon is dead; slain with his own hand.

Cho. [u] By his father's or his own hand?

Mess. Himself fell by himself, angry with his father for the death of Antigone.

Cho. O prophet, how truly didst thou foretel this?

Mess. These things being so, other evils are certainly resolved on.

Cho. I see the miserable Eurydice, and wife of Creon, coming out of the palace; or having heard something of the youth, or by accident she is here.

ACT V. SCENE II.

Eurydice, Messenger, Chorus.

Eur. Good citizens, I heard a discourse going out to offer my prayers and supplications to Pallas, and opening the bars of the stubborn gates, a voice of some domestic evil reached my ears: I fell down trembling among my maids, and was amazed; but whatsoever was the discourse, speak it again, for, not unexperienced in evils, I will hear you.

Mess. I will tell you, dear madam, since I am here, nor will omit the smallest circumstance of truth. For why should I sooth you up with those

[u] *By his father's or his own hand.*] The Scholiast starts this question, why should the Chorus ask who killed Hæmon, since, in the former words, it is said αὐτόχειρ, with his own hand; and thus he solves it, because the Chorus snatched the former words so quick, that they did not hear the latter.

tales, wherein at last I shall appear a liar; for the truth is ever right. I followed your husband to the field, where lay the miserable body of Polynices torn to pieces by dogs, (and beseeching the goddess of the Ways, [x] Proserpine, kindly to restrain her rage, washing in sacred water what was left of the body with green boughs, we burnt it, and raised a high tomb of earth that was hard by. Again we descend to the maid's low prison, Pluto's nuptial chamber; one hears a voice of mournings near the death-bed, unadorned with funeral pomp, and coming, signifies it to Creon, our master; and, as he approached, he hears a mournful voice, then lamenting he utters sad speeches. O me a wretch! am I a prophet? Do I go the most unfortunate of all ways that ever I went? the voice of my child now strikes my ear. But, servants, go quickly near, and standing by the tomb, look through that open crack at the cave's mouth; or I hear the voice of Hæmon, or am deceived by the gods. We obey our master's commands, and see Antigone, in the lower end of the tomb, hanging by the neck, entangled in a snare made of her girdle of fine linen, and Hæmon fallen down and embracing her about the middle, lamenting the ruin of his bed, the deed of his father, and the cursed stony cave. When he beheld him, sadly lamenting, he goes to him, and, calling with a loud voice, thus speaks to him. Thou wretch, what hast thou done? What hast thou in thy mind? In what calamity art thou fallen? Come hither, humbly I beseech you. The youth beholding him, with dismal eyes, answered nothing; but, spitting in his face, draws his two-edged sword, but [y] missed his intend-

[x] *Proserpine.*] The same with Hecate, or the Moon, and Diana.

[y] *Missed his intended blow.*] This action of Hæmon is blamed by Aristotle, as being cruel without necessity, and it is also without passion; but, as Mr. Dacier remarks, as it is but a small cir-

ed blow, his father escaping by flight. Then the wretch being angry with himself, that he was crossed, thrust the sword into the middle of his side; yet in his senses he embraced the tender arm of the virgin, and, breathing, sends out a swift shower of blood upon his pale cheek. Dead he lies by her dead: the wretched youth consummates his marriage in the chambers of death, proving, by his own example, how much rashness is the greatest evil among men. [*Exit Eurydice.*

cumstance of an episode, and doth not enter the composition of the subject, it is less faulty.

However these imperfect actions may seem in an epic poem, they are by no means to be admitted in tragedy.

Aristotle hath wrote his whole 15 cap. to direct poets how they ought to conduct themselves in managing those incidents which cause the terrible and the pitiful; of which I shall give the reader a short abridgement.

We may represent actions, says he, which are done by those who act with an entire knowledge, as Euripides represented Medea killing her children.

Or the actions of those who do not know the cruelty of their crimes, but when they are done, come to know the relation or friendship which was between them.

Or of a person that goes ignorantly to commit a very great crime, and then recollects himself before he puts it in execution.

These three ways are only proper for tragedy. The fourth is that which Aristotle condemns in the action of Hæmon as the worst of all, viz. when any person goes to commit a crime voluntarily and willingly, and yet does not execute it; for, besides its being horrible, it is no way tragical. The most vicious next is the first, because it is too horrible. The second is, without contradiction, better than the first and the last, for it is not cruel because of the ignorance of him who commits it, yet the remembrance is very pathetic.

The last is preferable to all the others, for it is not at all cruel, and answers the desire of the spectators. Whence it is plain, that neither this action of Hæmon, which is prevented by his father's flight; Achilles drawing his sword to slay Agamemnon, and prevented by Minerva; Æneas to kill Helena, and prevented by Venus; however suitable they may be for an epic poem, are very unfit for tragedy.

ACT V. SCENE III.

Chorus, Messenger.

Cho. What think you by this, the woman departed before she spoke good or bad.

Mess. I stood amazed at it, but am supported with hopes, that she, hearing of the death of her son, will not publicly shew her grief, but that, beneath her palace roof, with her maids, she will appoint a domestic mourning; for she is not so weak in her judgment as to err in this matter.

Cho. I know not, but this excessive silence to me seems sad, though much clamour indeed is vain.

Mess. But we shall know when we go into the palace whether she conceal any desperate unlawful design in her angry mind, for well thou sayest, excessive silence is grievous.

Cho. But the king himself comes, having in his arms the dead body, for which himself is only to be blamed.

ACT V. SCENE IV.

Creon, bearing his son's body in his arms.

Chorus, Servant, Messenger.

Cre. Alas, the mighty faults of evil minds, great and mortal as you see, kindred killers, and killed by their kindred! Woe is me, my unhappy counsels! O youth of early fate; thou art dead and gone, by my ill devices, and not thine.

Cho. Woe is me! how late dost thou seem to prove the punishment of justice?

Cre. Woe is me! with sorrow I know it, for now on my head the goddess of revenge laying that

weight, hath oppressed me, and in ill ways hath tortured me. Woe is me! depriving me of my wonted joy. O the sad sorrows of men.

Serv. O my lord, so it is with thee; these are thy sufferings, thy son thou bearest in thy arms, and other evils in the palace thou art come to view.

Cre. What other great evil is that?

Serv. Your queen is dead, the unhappy mother of this dead youth, with fresh wounds.

Cre. Vile port of death, why dost thou destroy me? thou hast caused me to suffer unutterable griefs. What dost thou say?

Cho. Woe! and woe! again, thou hast ruined an unhappy man.

Cre. What sayest thou, man? thou speakest some new speech to me. Woe! woe! to me, sayest thou my wife's body lies dead for the death of Hæmon?

Serv. She may be seen, nor is she still in the chambers.

Cre. Woe is me a wretch! I see another second evil. What, O what other fate still waits me? I have my son in my arms, and see another dead body there. O miserable mother! O son!

Cho. She with a sharp sword, near the altar, slew herself, mourning [z] the honourable death of Megareus, her former son, then of this, and last of all mourning your evil practices, as your son's murderer.

Cre. Woe! woe! I am dead with fear; why doth not some one give me a mortal wound with a two-

[z] *The honourable death of Megareus.*] By Megareus may be understood either a former husband which Eurydice had or a former son which was named first Megareus; but afterwards he slew himself to save the city, and thence was called Menœceus. According to the former sense, the translation will be thus: she mourned that she married Megareus, being so unfortunate in the loss of him, then her marriage with Creon. But my translation is according to the other sense, which I take to be the best.

edged sword? O wretch, I am quite immersed in sorrow.

Mess. Being accounted the cause of both their deaths, by her who lies here dead.

Cre. After what manner did she kill herself?

Mess. By striking herself to the heart with her own hand, after she perceived the lamentable fate of her son.

Cre. Woe is me! these are not chargeable on any else, the cause is only ours. Miserable wretch, I killed you, I speak the truth. O servant, lead me quickly hence, who am no more.

Cho. You advise what is gainful, if there be gain in evils; for the smallest of the greatest evils are the best.

Cre. Let my last day appear my last day, which will put an end to my misfortunes; let it come, oh! that I may not see another day.

Mess. Those things are to come, something present must be done; those things should be our care which deserve it.

Cre. But I have prayed for what I desire.

Mess. Pray for nothing, for no man hath freedom from destined calamity.

Cre. Bear me hence a useless wretch, who have killed thee unwillingly, my child; nor know I where to look, or where to betake myself; for my miserable fate oppresses me every way.

Cho. [a] To be wise is much the greatest happiness; it is not good to dishonour religion; proud words, which often have been fatal to those who speak them, teach men to be wise in their old age.

[a] *To be wise.*] These words contain the exode, or moral, of the piece. See the notes on the Oed. Tyr. Act V. Scene the last.

THE

TRAGEDY

OF

OEDIPUS COLONEUS.

Dramatis Personae.

OEDIPUS, after he had pulled out his eyes and was expelled from Thebes.

An Athenian, who first meets with and speaks to Oedipus and Antigone.

CREON, Brother and Uncle to Oedipus.

POLYNICES, Son of Oedipus.

THESEUS, King of Athens.

A Messenger.

Chorus of ancient Men of Athens.

WOMEN.

ANTIGONE and ISMENE.

MUTE PERSONS.

Guards and Attendants on Creon and Theseus, and one Attendant of Ismene.

SCENE—A Forest near the Temple of the venerable Goddesses.

OEDIPUS COLONEUS.

THE ARGUMENT.—*This Oedipus is the same with him upon whom the other Tragedy of Sophocles of that title is composed, but distinguished by the epithet of Coloneus; because, after his expulsion out of Thebes, he comes, being led by his daughter, Antigone, into Attic Greece, to a hill where was a temple and grove sacred to the Furies, (it was called likewise the Hill of Horses, because Neptune, the first creator of horses, called, therefore, Equestris, or Rider, and Prometheus, had there a temple,) where he relates all his misfortunes; taking that occasion from Creon's coming, in order to bring him back to Thebes, there having been an Oracle that wheresoever he died, and his sepulchre lay, the people of that country should be victorious over the other in the war between the Thebans and Athenians; and, going to a place called the Brazen Way, near a cavity where Pluto is feigned to have snatched Proserpine to his gloomy dominions, he was taken away in a wonderful manner. This Tragedy was composed by Sophocles, in his old age, to gratify both his own countrymen, the Colonites, and the Anthenians. How well it answered his ends, the following story, related by Dr. Potter, is a sufficient proof.*

Sophocles, being accused by Jophon and his other sons, before the Phratores, of neglecting his affairs, through dotage, read to them this Tragedy, which he had then lately composed, and asked them if they thought a dotard could be capable of making such a Tragedy, whereupon he was immediately acquitted.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Oedipus, and Antigone leading him.

Oed. Antigone, daughter of a blind old man, to what places are we come, or what city? [a] Who now will relieve wandering Oedipus? Or with small gifts relieve his pressing wants? I sue to none but for a slender alms; and though what I receive be less than little, yet it sufficeth me; for sufferings, old age, and, a third thing, nobleness of mind, teach me to be content. But, O daughter, if thou seest any [b] profane seat, or any sacred to the gods, place me there, that we may inquire where we are; for it is fit that, being strangers, we should learn of the citizens what is convenient to be done.

[a] *Who now will receive wandering.*] Gr. τίς τὸν πλανήτην Οἰδίπουν δέξεται. I have translated the word τίς here interrogatively, but it may likewise be understood to supply the place of the article ἥ, and to agree with the preceding word πόλιν, and then the translation will be, which will receive, &c. without an interrogation; yet the former sense is most usual among authors.

[b] *Profane seat.*] Gr. πρός βεβήλοις. This word is variously understood, βέβηλος τόπος is taken sometimes for the body of the temple, in opposition to the ἄδυτον, beyond which it was not unlawful for any one to enter but the priest. So βέβηλος ἀνὴρ signifies a lay-man, one who is not initiated into holy orders, in opposition to ἱερεὺς, a priest. Thus Horace, Carm. lib. iii. od. 1.

Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo.
Favete linguis, carmina non prius
Audita, musarum sacerdos.

Sometimes it is the same with μιαρὸς, or ἀκάθαρτος, a polluted or unclean person. Thus all who were ἀβέβηλοι, or unpolluted, were permitted to pass within or beyond the περιῤῥαντήριον, a vessel which stood at the temple door, and contained the holy water, but the βέβηλοι were not. Thus Euripides. Οὐ γὰρ θέμις βέβηλον ἅπλεσθαι δόμων, and θύρας δ' ἐπίσθεσθε βέβηλοι; so here βέβηλος τόπος, signifies a place free for any to be in.

Ant. O miserable father, Oedipus, the city, as well as I can conjecture at this distance, is surrounded by towers; here seems to be a sacred place, abounding with laurel, olive trees, and vines, [c] many nightingales sing in it. Here ease thy wearied limbs on this unpolished rock, for thou hast come a great way for an old man.

Oed. Set me down now, and guard a blind man.

Ant. I am not to learn that after so long experience.

Oed. Canst thou tell me where we are placed?

Ant. Near Athens, I know; but I know not this particular place, for every traveller told me that this was Attica. But shall I go and learn what place this is?

Oed. Yes, child, if it be habitable.

Ant. It is inhabited, but I believe there is no need, for I see a man near us.

Oed. Coming hither in haste?

Ant. Even just here, and to him you may say what is convenient for you to speak, for the man is here.

ACT I. SCENE II.

Oedipus, Stranger, Antigone.

Oed. O, stranger, I hear from her who sees for me, and for herself, that thou art come to me a lucky spy, to speak what we are uncertain of.

Stran. Before you inquire more, come out of this seat, for you possess a place which is not lawful to tread.

Oed. What place is this? What god is it sacred to?

[c] *Many nightingales sing in it.*] This passage is exceeding beautiful in the original.

Stran. It is not to be touched or inhabited, [d] for the venerable goddesses possess it, daughters of the earth and darkness.

Oed. Who? For I desire to know their sacred names.

Stran. The people who inhabit here call them the Eumenides, who see all things; but others are pleased to call them [e] by other names.

Oed. But may they receive their suppliant with mercy, that I may not return out of this land more.

Stran. What prayer is that thou hast addressed to the goddesses?

Oed. One which declares all my miseries.

Stran. But I have not confidence to be longer absent from the city ere I declare what is to be done.

Oed. Now, by the gods, stranger, do not slight me, though I am such a wanderer, but resolve my doubts.

Stran. Command me, for I will not slight thee.

Oed. What, therefore, is the place to which we are come?

Stran. As far as my knowledge can inform thee, thou shalt know all things. This whole place is sacred, reverend Neptune presides over it, and the

[d] *For the venerable goddesses.*] Phylarchus says they were two, and had each a statue at Athens: Polemon three, viz. Alecto, Megæra, and Tisiphone. They were, according to Sophocles, the daughters of the earth and darkness; but to others of Nox and Acheron. Euphorion calls them the daughters of Phorcus or Phorcon, a sea-monster, son of Pontus and Terra.

[e] *By other names.*] As ἐριννύες, or σεμναὶ θεαὶ. The Sicyonians, Athenians, and others, called them Εὐμενίδες, *i. e.* favourable or propitious; out of an opinion that their true names were unlucky omens: or, by an Antiphrasis, being quite contrary to favourable; for they are said to be the revengers of impiety, and to have snakes knit with their hair, who, by their biting, express the stings of conscience which accompany all wicked actions. Yet Philemon, a comic poet, will have it, that the σεμναὶ, or ἔμφοβοι θεαὶ, were different from the Εὐμενίδες.

fire-bearing god, [f] Prometheus, the Titan; that place of the earth thou treadest upon is called the [g] Brazen Way, the defence of Athens; and the neighbouring villages pray that this verdant hill may be their defence, and thence they have all their common names of Colonites. This is the state of the case, not more known by reports than by certain knowledge.

Oed. Doth any one inhabit these places?

Stran. Yes, and they are named from the god.

Oed. Doth any govern them; or is the command in the multitude?

Stran. These countries round the city are governed by the king.

Oed. But who is it whose voice and power commands?

Stran. He is called Theseus, son of the former Ægeus.

Oed. And would not any messenger go from you to him?

Stran. To say what? To desire him to come hither?

Oed. That, affording a little, he may gain much.

Stran. What help can we expect from a man who cannot see?

Oed. Whatsoever we shall say shall be as plain as if we saw.

[f] *Prometheus, the Titan.*] He is worshipped at Athens, as is Vulcan likewise; where, in the academy, Prometheus being the elder, is placed on the right hand, holding a sceptre, and Vulcan on the left. He is called Titan by way of comparison, because, without permission from Jupiter, he stole fire from heaven, and gave it to men, for which he suffered the same punishment with the Titans, brother-sons of Saturn, viz. he was fixed under Mount Caucasus, and a vulture always was knawing on his liver.

[g] *The Brazen Way.*] A place so called in the temple; it was said there was a passage that way to Hades. It takes that epithet from the brazen mines with which the hill abounded, where the grove and temple stood.

Stran. Hear then my proposal: mistake me not, stranger; since thou art noble as thou seemest to me, beyond thy fortune, remain there where thou art, until I go and tell these things to my neighbours, who are here, and not to the citizens, for they will judge whether it be fit you stay or return again.

ACT I. SCENE III.

Oedipus, Antigone.

Oed. O daughter, is not the stranger gone from us?

Ant. He is gone, father, so that every thing is in quiet, and you may speak as being near me alone.

Oed. O venerable Furies, since I now first have sat upon this earth be not to me and Apollo unkind, who, after having pronounced concerning me many unfortunate oracles, said, that here should be my rest after many tedious years, coming to the borders of this country, where I might receive a seat, and reception from the venerable goddesses, and [h] there,

[h] *There, inhabiting, lay down.*] The passage which the old Scholiast cites, from Lysimachus, seems to contradict Sophocles's fiction of Oedipus's dying in Attica, which is as follows: When the friends of Oedipus would have buried him in Thebes, they were hindered by the Thebans, because of the plague inflicted on them upon his account: whereupon they took his body, and buried it, at Ceus, in Bœotia; but, some misfortunes happening to the inhabitants, they judged that the body of Oedipus lying there was the occasion of them; whereupon they ordered his friends to take away the body, which they did, and privately buried it in the temple of Ceres, in Eteonus; but the inhabitants thereabouts, hearing of it, consulted their God, whether to cast him out thence or not: his answer was, that they should not stir him, being a suppliant of the goddess. The temple is called from him Oedipodium.

But there is no truth in it neither, if we may believe Homer, who speaks of his dying at Thebes. Il. ψ.

Ὃς ποτὲ Θήβας ἦλθε δεδυπότος Οἰδιπόδαο
Ες τάφον.

inhabiting, lay down my miserable life, [i] to those who receive me gain, but loss to those who sent me hither, who drove me out. He likewise foretold, that signs would appear to me of these things, or earthquake, or thunder, or lightning of Jove: and now I know, that doubtless some faithful augury from you hath led me this way into this forest, for it cannot be that in my travels I should meet with you first by accident, (I being sober [k] and you averse to wine,) or sit upon this venerable and unpolished seat. Wherefore, O goddesses, according to the answers of Apollo, grant me here an end and catastrophe of my life; unless I seem to have had something too small trouble, although always oppressed by the greatest evils incident to mankind. Come, therefore, O sweet children of old darkness; come, who from most mighty Pallas art called, O Athens, the most honourable of cities; pity this miserable image of Oedipus, for this is not the ancient body.

Ant. Be silent, for hither come some ancient men as viewers of your seat.

[i] *To those who receive me gain, but loss.*] The Scholiast thinks the Athenians and Thebans were then at strife, and that the poet says this to gratify the former.

[k] *And you averse to wine.*] *Gr.* νήφων ἀοίνοις, sober to you sober, so called because their sacrifices consisted of water. And Polemon says, that the Athenians sacrificed sober sacrifices or libations likewise to Memory, the Muses, the Morning, the Sun, Moon, Nymphs, Urania Venus. Crates says, likewise, that all wood, except that of the vine, was called νηφάλια ξύλα. But Philochorus, on the other hand, says, that thyme was the only wood which was so called, and the first that was ever used for burnt offerings, ἐμπύρευς θυσίας, and that therefore it takes its name of thyme, from θύω, to sacrifice. The learned Doctor Potter is of opinion, that there was a particular reason why each of these before-mentioned deities were honoured with such oblations: first, the Eumenides, because the divine justice ought always to be vigilant. Secondly, the Sun, because he by whom all things are encompassed and held together, ought to be temperate. Thirdly, Bacchus, that men might not always be accustomed to strong and unmixed wines, &c. See Archæol. Græc. vol. i. p. 212.

Oed. I will be silent, and thou lead me out of the way and hide me in the forest, that I may hear what they will say, for by hearing we may learn what to do.

ACT I. SCENE IV.

They withdraw farther into the Forest, and enter the Chorus of ancient Men of Athens.

Cho. [l] See, but who is he? Where doth he hide? Where is the wandering exile, [m] the most insatiable of all men? search him: look, see, call every where for this wanderer, this old wanderer; he is no inhabitant, otherwise he would never have come to this inaccessible forest of the invincible goddesses, whom we tremble to mention [n] and pass by without speech

[l] *See, but who is he? where, &c.*] The Chorus hearing of Oedipus's placing himself in that forbidden place, first comes in and expostulates in the following manner. See, but who is he? Where doth he hide? Where is the wandering exile, &c.

Although the Chorus entereth here, yet this is not the first song of the Chorus, or the Parodos, but they speak here without singing: it would indeed have been very unnatural, had the Chorus here entered singing, before they were instructed in the action, in which they were to be concerned. But after Oedipus had placed himself in the temple and grove of the Eumenides, and given occasion to the assembling of the Chorus, and they had informed both themselves and the audience in the nature of the action, they then begin the Parodos, or first song, and act their part as a Chorus, who before only joined in speaking the prologue, that is, all that precedes the first song of the Chorus. This distinction is to be observed between the Parodos, or first song of the Chorus and its discourse in all the tragedies of the ancients; although, for want of having sufficiently examined this practice, the latter hath been taken for the former. The first song of the Chorus always closeth the first act, and in this tragedy begins at the words, Ἐυίππᾳ ξένε τᾶσδε χώρας. And ends with νηρηΐδων ἀκόλουθος.

[m] *The most insatiable.*] *i. e.* Whom no other place could satisfy.

[n] *And pass by without, &c.*] As persons in dread of some impending danger dare not speak or think of any thing but what is most pure and innocent.

or thought, but speaking words of lucky omen. And now it is said that some one is come without any reverence to this hallowed place, whom I looking for through the whole forest cannot know where he is hid.

Oed. Here I am; I heard what you said.

[*Oedipus at a distance speaks.*

Cho. Alas, alas! terrible to look on, and terrible to hear.

Oed. I beseech you look not on me as an impious man.

Cho. O Jupiter, the Defender, who is this old man?

Oed. Governors of this land, not altogether one whom you may judge happy for my former fortune, that is plain; for otherwise I had not crept hither with other eyes than my own, nor, at this age, come hither on a small account.

Cho. Alas, alas! for those blind eyes most unhappy you are, an unfortunate old man, as thou seemest; but thou shalt not charge on us those curses which attend this rashness; thou goest where it is not lawful for thee to go. Come not on this herby silent grove, where a full cup of water mixed with wine is offered to the venerable goddesses. Take good care of this, unfortunate stranger, avoid it. Be gone, the long distance interposes. But dost thou hear, thou wretched wanderer, if thou givest any attention to my speech, go from these inaccessible places, and speak, where the same liberty is allowed to all; but first curb thyself.

Oed. Daughter, what can one think?

Ant. Father, it is necessary you think with the citizens, and willingly submit to them.

Oed. Now take hold of me.

Ant. I do hold thee.

Oed. O stranger, let me not be hurt, since trusting to you I come forth.

Cho. By no means, none shall lead thee unwillingly from those seats.

Oed. Still, therefore, still shall I advance.

[*Oedipus comes forward, led by Antigone.*

Cho. Advance more forward.

Oed. Yet?

Cho. Come forward, maid, for thou hearest.

Ant. But follow, follow this way, father, with thy dark body, where I lead; and, being a stranger, content yourself to know no other bounds of right and wrong than what are here prescribed.

Oed. Do thou lead me now, child, that when we come, we may speak with piety, and likewise hear and not resist necessity.

Cho. There, move not thy foot from that threshold which bounds the inaccessible way.

Ant. Thus?

Cho. Enough. Stand. [*Comes forward.*

Oed. Shall I sit?

Cho. Across on the top of the rock, bending forward a little.

Ant. Father, this is my business, gently to direct each step you tread; therefore commit your ancient body to my loving hand. [*Placing him down.*

Oed. Woe is me, sad misfortune!

Cho. O wretch, since you are now easy, tell who are thy parents, and who art thou, who so miserably art led?

Oed. Strangers, I am a banished man; but do not———

Cho. Why dost thou refuse that, old man?

Oed. Ask me not who I am, nor search, nor inquire farther.

Cho. What is that?

Oed. Wretched race.

Cho. Speak.

Oed. Woe is me, daughter! what shall I say?

Cho. Of what race art thou, stranger? speak, of what paternal descent?

Oed. Woe is me, my child! what shall I suffer?

Ant. Speak, since thou art now at the last extremity.

Oed. I will speak, for I cannot be secret.

Cho. You delay long, but make haste.

Oed. Know ye the son of Laius?

Cho. Woe is me!

Oed. Descendant of Labdacus.

Cho. O Jupiter!

Oed. Unhappy Oedipus.

Cho. Art thou he?

Oed. Fear not what I say.

Cho. Woe! woe!

Oed. Unhappy I.

Cho. Ah! ah!

Oed. Daughter, what will be the event?

Ant. Get thee far hence out of this country; but what can you answer to justify your breach of promise?

Cho. Fatal punishment will fall on none for revenging those injuries he hath suffered, and [o] frauds are more justly recompensed by frauds than favours: but thou again return out of these places, and leave our land, lest you constrain our city to use some act of violence against you.

Ant. [p] O reverend strangers, since you endure not my old blind father, having heard the report of his involuntary crimes, yet we beseech you pity me, a wretch, who supplicate for my father, who beholding your presence with awful eyes, as one sprang from your blood, pray that this miserable man may find reverence with you. We, wretches, rely on you as on a god. Go, grant this unhoped-for kindness,

[o] *Frauds are more justly recompensed.*] The Chorus finding out the truth, *i. e.* that he was a polluted person, think themselves not bound by their promise, in regard that he had deceived them.

[p] *O reverend strangers.*] Here Antigone finding the despicable case they were in, bespeaks their compassion in very moving terms.

I beseech you, if you have ought that is dear to you, care for your offspring, regard for your promise or your interest, or reverence to God. For there is none of all mankind who can escape when God misleads him into secret crimes.

Cho. But know, daughter of Oedipus, we pity thee and him by reason of his calamity: but fearing from the gods we cannot speak other language than what we have spoke to you already.

Oed. What advantage is there in glory or fame founded on false reports, when they say [q] Athens is the most pious city, and only city for protecting a stranger, and for helping him? Do I experience this truth? for, first having removed me from these seats, you expel me hence, fearing only my name: not this my person or my crimes, since my crimes are rather what I suffered than acted. If you must speak to what concerns my father and mother, on whose account you fear me, which I know very well, how am I in nature bad, who suffering violence repaid it back? So that if with perfect knowledge I had done it, yet were I worthy of pardon; but I through ignorance fell into those misfortunes; they who expelled me did it knowing what they did. Wherefore, strangers, I beseech you, by the gods, since you have moved me from my place, preserve me here, lest while you seem to honour the gods you honour them not at all; but you will see that they regard good men, and wicked too, and that no wicked man shall escape divine vengeance. Do not, therefore, by aiding in impious acts, dishonour happy Athens; but as you have received me a suppliant, and as you have given me your promise, preserve me, defend me, nor, seeing my wretched head, dishonour me,

[q] *Athens is the most pious city.*] There was (says the Scholiast) an altar at Athens raised to Ἔλεος, *i. e.* Mercy, whom they adored as a goddess.

for I come holy and pious, and bringing assistance to these citizens. When the lord is present who is the prince, he shall hear and know all my state; but till then by no means be unkind.

Cho. It is very just, old man, we should revere your arguments, which have been urged not with few words; it sufficeth us that the governors of this land know all.

Oed. Do you think he will have any reverence or care of a blind man? and that he will come without reluctance?

Cho. Doubtless, when he hears your name.

Oed. Who will tell him that?

Cho. The way indeed is long, yet much frequented by travellers, who spread abroad all news. Be confident he hearing this will come; for your name, old man, hath reached all people's ears: so that, though dull he sleeps, hearing of you he will come hither quickly.

Oed. But may he come in an auspicious hour to this city and to me; for what good man is not a friend to himself?

Ant. O Jupiter, what shall I say, or whither shall I go?

Oed. What is it, daughter?

Ant. I see a woman coming near us upon a Sicilian horse, and a Thessalian hat to hide her from the sun, upon her head, covers her face. What shall I say? Is it she or is it not? or doth my judgment wander so in doubtfulness that I know not what to say, a wretch? she is no other but Ismene, for her cheerful eyes declare she is.

Oed. What hast thou said, child?

Ant. That I see your daughter and my sister; but by her voice we may soon know.

ACT I. SCENE V.

Oedipus, Antigone, Ismene, Chorus.

Ism. O meeting the most agreeable to me of my father and sister, with what difficulty I have found you, and having found you with grief I see you.

Oed. My child, thou art come.

Ism. My father, miserable object to behold.

Oed. O daughter of my own blood.

Ism. Unhappy father.

Oed. Daughter do I behold thee?

Ism. But not free from sorrow.

Oed. Touch me, child.

Ism. I embrace you both together.

Oed. Her and me?

Ism. And me the unhappy third.

Oed. Child, why art thou come?

Ism. Out of care for you.

Oed. The love of us?

Ism. And likewise to tell you, that with this only faithful servant I came hither.

Oed. But your younger brothers, where are they, at labour?

Ism. They are where they are; there are sad disturbances now among them.

Oed. How are they all conformed to the Ægyptian laws, both in disposition and manner of life, [r] for there the men sit at home, working with the spindle,

[r] *For there the men.*] This custom was introduced by Sesostris, who imposed the duties of men on women, and of women on men: for, in order to change their dispositions, as well as their different tasks, he ordered the men to go bare-headed, but the women to let their hair grow; the men to bear their burthens on their heads, but the women on their shoulders; the men to make water sitting, but the women standing; the men to wear but one garment, and the women two. This was done that there minds being emasculated, they might be the less able to resist his usurped power.

but their wives always abroad prepare all things necessary for the support of life. So those of you, my children, whom it was fit should labour, keep house like virgins, but you instead of them, for my sake, in my afflictions, employ all your pains for Antigone, since she left her infant food and her strength grew ripe, always an unhappy wanderer, with me led her life; often in the dismal woods without food, her tender feet inured to pain, in cold rains drenched, and scorched with the extremities of burning sunny heats, neglected the comforts of retirement at home, so she might get food for her father. But you, O daughter, went out before to bring all the oracles to thy father unknown to the Thebans, which are delivered concerning me. Thou hast been a faithful keeper to me since I was expelled out of the land, but now what message dost thou bring, Ismene, to thy father? What warlike expedition hath driven thee from home? Thou art not come empty, that I know well, but bringest some terrible news to me.

Ism. The sufferings, father, which I suffered seeking for you, I will pass by, (for I will not renew my griefs, by a fruitless narration of them,) but what evils are now among your unfortunate children, those I come to declare. Before there was a contention between them whether the kingdom should descend to Creon, and the city not to be polluted; then they reasoned concerning the ancient stain which polluted your miserable house. But now, from some of the gods, or a destructive spirit, sad strife is risen among the wretches themselves, who should possess the government and despotic power; and the younger and inferior by age deprives Polynices, who was first born, of the throne, and drives him out of the country. Now he (as fame reports) coming to Argos, a fugitive, takes his new kindred and friends for his companions in the war,

that the glory of the Argians may mount to the skies by the ruin of the Theban land; and these are not a mere multitude of words, but such as truly declare the cruel deeds. But when the gods will pity your miseries I cannot learn.

Oed. Hast thou therefore any hope the gods have any care of me, and that I shall sometime be freed.

Ism. I have, by these present oracles.

Oed. What are they? What hath been foretold?

Ism. That you would one time be desired by these men dead and live, for your assistance.

Oed. What can be expected from such a man as I?

Ism. They say, that in you is all their strength.

Oed. Now that I am no more, doth my manhood most appear?

Ism. For now the gods raise you up, before they ruined you.

Oed. It is in vain to raise an old man, who fell when young.

Ism. Know that Creon, on account of these things, will come in a little time.

Oed. To do what, daughter? tell me.

Ism. That they may place you near the Theban land, and possess your body; but you may not enter the borders of the land.

Oed. What advantage will they get by my lying near the gates?

Ism. Your tomb will be unfortunate and grievous to them, if from home.

Oed. Without the information of God who can find out that?

Ism. For this cause they will place thee near the country, nor give thee thy own liberty.

Oed. Will they bury me in Theban dust?

Ism. No, father, your kindred's blood which you have shed suffers not that.

Oed. And would they not possess my body?

Ism. No; for that would be unfortunate to the Thebans.

Oed. How can that be?

Ism. Because of the wrath of the gods which pursues thee when they put thee in thy sepulchre.

Oed. From whom didst thou hear those words which thou speakest?

Ism. From those who were present at the Delphic altars.

Oed. And did Phœbus say these things of me?

Ism. As the ambassadors say who returned from thence to Thebes.

Oed. Which of my children did hear this?

Ism. Both together, and know it well.

Oed. And did the wicked youths, hearing these things, out of love to me, resolve to seize the government?

Ism. I grieve to hear the news, yet bring it.

Oed. But may the gods never extinguish this their fatal strife, but may the end only be in me of the war in which they are now engaged, and raise up arms: so may he who now possesseth the sceptre and kingdom not continue in his present state, nor he who is gone out of the city return again; who did not keep nor defend me their father, so dishonourably expelled the country; for, driven from my throne, I was sent out by them and declared an exile. But you may say that the city freely granted that as a gift to gratify my request. By no means, for in that day when anger raged, and it was most pleasant to me to die, and even to be stoned with stones, none appeared to favour my request; but in time, when all trouble was mitigated, and they there saw my mind extravagant in grief had punished me more than my former faults deserved, then straight the city violently drove me into banishment after I had been long in it. But they, when they could assist their father, would not do it; but for a

small offence, a poor exile from them I wander; and from those who are but virgins, as much as the weakness of their sex allows, I am supplied with necessaries of life, and am secured from harm in whatsoever place I come, and even my honour is by their care preserved. They, before their father, have chose to gain thrones and sceptres, and govern a country: but neither will they ever have me their assistant, nor shall they ever enjoy the empire, as I perceive by hearing these oracles which Ismene brings, and comparing them with the ancient oracles which Phœbus once delivered concerning me. Wherefore let them send Creon for me, or any other powerful citizen; yet if you, strangers, together with these venerable goddesses of your country, will assist me, you will purchase by that act a mighty [s] saviour for this city, but for my enemies troubles.

Cho. Oedipus is worthy to be pitied, he and his daughters; but since you propose yourself, in your discourse, a saviour of this city, I would recommend to you what is convenient.

Oed. Dear strangers, do but receive me now, and I will perform all that your will requires.

Cho. Offer an expiation to the goddesses to whom you came, and whose ground you have trod.

Oed. By what means, strangers, tell me?

Cho. First taking sacred libations out of the perpetual fountain, offer them with pure hands.

Oed. But when I have taken of that incorrupt stream; what then?

Cho. There are cups, the work of an ingenious artist, whose heads and [t] two ears do thou crown.

[s] *Saviour for this city.*] Either in the Peloponnesian or other war, though this was feigned by the poet to flatter his country. *Scholiast.*

[t] *Two ears do thou.*] *Gr.* λάβας ἀμφισσόμας, double mouthed, or handled, or rather having heads of animals engraved on each side.

Oed. With green boughs, or threads, or by what manner?

Cho. With the new fleece of a young sheep.

Oed. Be it so: what is within the cup, how must I offer that?

Cho. Stand, and [u] pour out libations to the sun.

Oed. Out of those pitchers which you speak of shall I pour them?

Cho. Water out of the three fountains, and the last drop.

Oed. With what shall I fill this? Tell me that likewise.

Cho. With honey and water, add no wine.

Oed. But when the leafed earth hath received these things, what then?

Cho. [x] Add three times nine olive-boughs with both your hands, and offer these prayers.

[u] *Pour out libations to the sun.*] *Gr.* first morning. These libations offered to the sun were mostly honey alone, or honey mixed with water; but it was unlawful to offer him any wine, as appears by the following express prohibition of the Chorus.

Ὕδασος, μελίσσης, μηδὲ προσφέρειν μέθυ.

Honey and water, add no wine.

Cratinus speaks of the σχῖνον μεγάλην, or mastick-tree, being offered to him.

Ἄγε δὴ πρὸς Ἑω πρῶτον ἀπάνλων ἵστω, δὲ
Λάμβανε χερσὶ σχῖνον μεγάλην.

Go stand before the sun, and take in your hand the great mastick-tree.

[x] *Add three times nine olive boughs.*] Of the several kinds of κλάδοι ἱκτήριοι, or φυλλάδες ἱκτῆρες, *i. e.* suppliant boughs, mentioned in our notes on Oedipus Tyrannus, Act i. Scene i. Observe farther, that the most in use with suppliants were laurel or olive; whence Statius,

Mite nemus circa ———
Vittatæ laurus, et supplicis arbor olivæ.

About this grove the peaceful olive grows,
And sprightly laurel, on whose verdant boughs,
Wreathed garlands hang ———

H. H.

Oed. Supplication being my chief affair those would I hear.

Cho. Since we invoke the Eumenides, do thou pray thyself, that with a tender breast they would receive their votary, who brings safety to us, and if thou hast any other friend let him assist thee, [y] nor let thy voice be heard or thy prayer long; then return and come away: after this with confidence I may assist you, if you obey these orders; otherwise I shall fear you, stranger.

Oed. My children, have you heard those country strangers?

Ism. We have heard, and do you give your commands, to do whatsoever their will requires.

Oed. These things are out of my way, for I am deficient in two evils, in that I have not power, nor my sight; one of you come and perform these commands, for I suppose it sufficient if for many one do them in benevolence. With speed something is to be done, but leave me not alone, for this my body alone cannot creep without a guide.

Ism. I go therefore to execute these orders; but that place which I must find out, where I may have the water, that would I learn.

Cho. Here, at this wood, O stranger; but if you have need of any thing, there is an inhabitant who will inform you.

Ism. I go therefore to this pious work.

The laurel was esteemed a sign of victory and triumph, the olive of peace and good-will.

[y] *Nor let thy voice be heard.*] These rites, like the Eleusinia, were performed with most profound silence, before which they sacrificed a ram to the demi-god Hesuchus, who had a temple at Cydon, in Crete, and his priestesses were called Hesuchidæ. Whence some authors have put silence for religion itself. Hor. lib. iii. od. 2.

Est et fideli tuta silentio
Merces.

Ant. But thou here guard my father, nor ought we to repine at those services we pay to our parents.

ACT I. SCENE VI.

Chorus, Oedipus, Antigone.

Cho. [z] It is a grievous thing to awake an evil that lay long asleep, yet I desire to hear——

Oed. What?

Cho. Of the cause of your sad and miserable calamity in which you are fallen.

Oed. O, by your kind reception do not make me repeat the story of my griefs, for I have endured sad hardships.

Cho. That rumour which is much spread, nor as yet ceaseth, I desire to hear.

Oed. Alas, alas!

Cho. Be content, I beseech you.

Oed. Woe is me!

Cho. Obey me, and I in my turn will tell as much as you.

Oed. I have suffered evil, strangers; I have suffered, but, God knows, unwillingly, and none of them were of my own choice.

Cho. But how?

Oed. The city, unknowing, joined me to an incestuous marriage-bed.

Cho. Didst thou (as I hear) partake thy mother's wretched bed?

Oed. Woe is me! it is death to hear these things, but these two are descended from me.

Cho. How sayest thou?

Oed. O children, fruits of my crimes.

[z] *It is a grievous thing to, &c.*] Ismene being gone, the Chorus desires Oedipus to relate the story of his misfortunes, which he is unwilling to do.

Cho. O Jupiter!

Oed. They are born by one mother's painful throes.

Cho. They are, therefore, your children, and, likewise sisters of their father.

Oed. Alas!

Cho. Alas, indeed!

Oed. Numberless evils.

Cho. Thou hast suffered.

Oed. I have suffered sad evils.

Cho. Thou hast done.

Oed. I have not done.

Cho. What, therefore?

Oed. [a] I received a gift, which, unfortunate wretch, I wish I had never received of the city.

Cho. Thou wretch! why, therefore, didst thou commit that murder?

Oed. What is it thou desirest to know?

Cho. Of your father.

Oed. Alas! thou addest one sorrow to another.

Cho. Thou art undone.

Oed. I am undone, but I have——

Cho. What is that?

Oed. A just excuse.

Cho. What excuse?

Oed. I will tell thee; I have slain and destroyed others, but by law guiltless, and ignorant I did it.

Cho. But the king is come here to us, Theseus, the son of Ægeus.

ACT I. SCENE VII.

Theseus, Oedipus, Antigone.

Thes. Having heard formerly from many of the bloody ruin of your eyes, I know you to be the son

[a] *I received a gift.*] *i.e.* His mother in marriage, as a recompense for solving the Ænigma of Sphinx.

of Laius; and now, since I have heard of you in the way, I know you better; for your habit and miserable body declare who you are. In pity, therefore, to your sad state, I would know of you, unhappy Oedipus, what dost thou demand of us or of the city? thyself, or this miserable attendant on thee, speak; for you must urge some prodigious request which I will refuse. The dangers which have threatened me in foreign lands, as they do every stranger, have taught me to abandon none, nor refuse my aid against his dangers; for, being a man, I am sensible that the events which to-morrow may bring to pass, are not more certainly known to me than they are to you.

Oed. O Theseus, thou hast shewn thy noble worth in few words, so that I need to speak but little, for thou hast spoke both who I am, of what father born, and from what land I came, so that nothing remains to me but to speak what I require, and my discourse is done.

Thes. Tell me what you require.

Oed. I come to deliver my miserable body a gift to you, not desirable for sight, but the advantage from it is greater than its form is beauteous.

The. What advantage dost thou come to bring?

Oed. You may know in time, but not at present.

The. When will the advantage by you be made appear?

Oed. When I die, and you bury me.

The. Thou askest the last things of life, middle things thou forgetest, or makest light of.

Oed. There those middle things are likewise given me.

The. A small favour dost thou ask of me.

Oed. But, observe, here is not a small conflict.

The. Whether do you speak with respect to your own kindred or me?

Oed. They will necessitate me to depart hence.

The. Then, if they will, it is unfit that you continue in banishment.

Oed. When I would have fled they did not permit me.

The. Weak man, in adversity anger is not decent.

Oed. When you shall have learnt all the truth, then admonish me; but, in the mean time, let me speak.

The. Inform me, for I ought not to speak without judgment.

Oed. O Theseus, I have suffered sad evils upon evils.

The. Do you mean the ancient calamities of your house?

Oed. No; for that discourse is in the mouth of every one in Greece.

The. What is that you suffer beyond human bearing?

Oed. Thus it is with me; I was driven out of my country by my own offspring, nor is it allowed me again to return, as being a parricide.

The. Why, therefore, should they send for you to live apart from them?

Oed. A divine oracle obliges them.

The. What misfortunes do they fear from the oracle?

Oed. That it is their fate to be overcome in this land.

The. How can these grievous quarrels happen between them and me?

Oed. The gods alone are free from the decays of age and death, all other things powerful time confounds; the vigour of the earth fades, of bodies likewise fades; faith dies, unfaithfulness revives, and the same spirit of unity is not lasting among friends, nor with one city towards another; those things which once were pleasant become bitter, and the same things again pleasant. So, likewise, now,

if a settled tranquillity seems to reign between the Thebans and you, a long succession of many succeeding nights and days will at last disclose that fatal period, wherein they will dissolve this mutual harmony in war, for a small fault, when my sleeping buried carcass, though long cold, shall occasion the spilling of their warm blood, if Jove be still Jove, and Apollo be true. But it is not agreeable to speak unalterable oracles; indulge me in those favours which I first did ask, keeping only your faith, and you shall never say you received Oedipus an useless inhabitant of those places, if the gods do not deceive me.

Cho. Before, O king, these and such like speeches this man spoke relating to this land.

The. Who, therefore, should reject the benevolence of such a man? Should I, whose palace before was always a common refuge, even for captive foes? But this man comes a suppliant of the goddesses, and pays not to me and this land a small tribute. For all these reasons, I respect him, and I will never reject his kindness, but will grant him a seat in this land. If it be pleasing to thee, stranger, to remain here, I order you to take care of him; but, if it please him, he may go with me. I allow thee, Oedipus, to judge and choose which thou wilt, and I shall agree with you.

Oed. O Jove! may all happiness attend such good men.

The. What wouldest thou, therefore, go into my palace?

Oed. If I may have liberty, there is a place here.

The. Wherein, what wilt thou do? for I will not resist you.

Oed. Wherein I shall overcome those who banished me.

The. Great then is the benefit of your residing here.

Oed. Aye, if you make good to me the promise of your assistance.

The. Trust that to me, I will not betray you.

Oed. I will not bind you by oath, as a wicked man.

The. You should gain no more by that than by my word.

Oed. How, therefore, will you do?

The. What dost thou chiefly fear?

Oed. There will come men.

The. Then these will take care.

Oed. Beware of the consequence if you leave me.

The. Teach me not what I must do.

Oed. There is an absolute necessity to fear.

The. My heart fears not.

Oed. Thou knowest not their threats.

The. I know that no man shall lead thee away home by force from me; many threats and many vain words in rage they may breathe, but, when the mind is firm with its own strength, threats are no more; but, though they be able to speak terrible things to these of leading you away, I know [b] the danger of taking you away by force will affright them from the attempt. Therefore, you may be of courage without my counsel, if Apollo sent you hither; likewise, though I be not present, I know that my name will secure you, that you will not suffer ill.

ACT I. SCENE VIII.

Chorus.

STROPHE I.

Cho. Thou art come, stranger, unto these fertile

[b] *The danger of taking you away by force will affright them from the attempt.*] Φανήσεται μακρὸν τὸ δεῦρο πέλαγος, ἀδὲ πλώσιμον. There will appear a long sea, and unnavigable. For, as dangers of the seas affright men from sailing, so hazardous enterprizes affright men from undertaking them.

regions, the best pastures of all the earth, a fruitful hill, where the sweet nightingale, chiefly frequenting, sings with quivering voice in green valleys, sitting under shady tufts of ivy, and fruitful leaves of the god Bacchus, unpierced by the sun, nor shattered by any storms of winds, where raging Bacchus always walks, conversant among his divine Nourses.

Antistrophe I.

[c] Narcissus, bearing beautiful leaves, flourishes daily by celestial dew, with which a crown, according to the ancient custom, is knit in honour to the great goddesses; and here the fields are gilt with gilden saffron; nor do the never-sleeping fountains which nourish the streams of Cephissus fail, but, daily fruitful to the fields, with a perpetual stream, he glides; nor do the choirs of Muses abhor these places, nor golden Venus.

Strophe II.

There is here such a thing as I never heard of in the land of Asia, nor in Dorica, the great island of Pelops, a plant which grows of itself. A terror to

[c] *Narcissus, bearing beautiful leaves, &c.*] Commentators differ upon this passage; some say, that, by the great goddesses are meant Ceres and Proserpine; others say the Furies. They who contend for the former opinion say, ȣ̓ μόνον ϛάχυσιν ἀυτὰς ϛεφανȣ̃σι. But the other opinion seems to be the truest, for this place was sacred to the Furies. Secondly, Euphorion saith, Ἐυμενίδες ἀργῆτες θυγατρίδαι φόρκυνος, Ναρκίσσοιο ἐπιϛεφέες πλοκαμῖδες. Eumenides, the beautiful daughters of Phorcun, crowned with Narcissus. It is ascribed to them either because it grows near tombs, or from its name, which alludes to the word ναρκᾶν, to affright, which is the business of those goddesses. Again, if it be the ancient crown of Proserpine, or the flower which she was gathering to make a crown when she was borne away by Pluto, Sophocles would not have used the plural number to comprehend Ceres likewise.—Lastly, in the Thesmophoria there were no such crowns used, but the high-priest, the priestesses, and torch-bearer, wore crowns of myrtle and yew.

the destroying sword, which chiefly flourishes in this region, [d] the leaf of the brown fruitful olive tree. Neither young man nor one in old age who commands durst destroy it, but the eye of [e] Jupiter Morios is always watchful to guard it and brown-eyed Minerva.

Antistrophe II.

I have another commendation for this metropolis to mention, which is indeed its greatest glory, a gift bestowed upon her by the great deity, and that is, that it is excellent for breeding horses of most generous kind, and the practice of the naval art. O son of Saturn, king Neptune, thou hast raised it to all this glory. Thou first didst make the rein a restraint to the horse for these cities, and the ship, well stored with oars, grasped by the rowers hands,

[d] *The leaf of the brown olive tree.*] The Scholiast, on this passage, cites the words of Ister, saying, that there was in the academy a branch of that olive-tree which grew in the Acropolis, and they decreed that whoever cut it down should be deemed accursed, whether friend or enemy; whereupon, when Archidamus, son of Zeuxidamus, king of the Lacedæmonians, invaded Attica, with ten thousand Peloponnesians and Bœotians, they ravaged all the country, yet would not hurt those olives which grew in the Academy, for fear of the curse; yet Aristotle informs us that the conqueror in any of the games which were exercised at the celebration of the Panathenæa, a festival in honour of Minerva, received a crown of them. These olives were called μόριαι, and the tree was produced by Minerva in a contention with Neptune, which should give name to Athens, and, therefore, they were sacred to her. Some derive the name from the word μόρος, death, in remembrance of the misfortune of Halirrhothius, the son of Neptune, who, in a rage at his father's defeat, offering to cut down the olive-tree, missed his aim, and gave himself a fatal blow. Others derive the name from μέρος, *i. e.* part; because, according to some, the olives of which the victor's crown consisted, were given by contribution, every one being obliged to contribute his part towards the solemnization of this festival.

[e] *Jupiter Morios.*] The Scholiast calls him Ζεὺς πλησίον Ἀκαδημίαν, Jupiter near the Academy; for there the tree grew, and Jupiter had a temple near it.

as swiftly rides upon the yielding waves as the [f] Nereides who have a hundred feet.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Antigone, Oedipus, Chorus.

Ant. O land, commended with much praise, now is it convenient for you to shew your merit of that noble praise?

Oed. What sudden accident hath caused thy transport, child?

Ant. Creon approaches to us not without guards.

Oed. Dear strangers, loved old men to me, now the time of safety approaches.

Cho. Be of good courage, it will come; though I am an old man, yet the strength of this land is not old.

ACT II. SCENE II.

Creon and Followers, Oedipus, Antigone, Chorus.

Cre. Ye noble inhabitants of this land, I see in your eyes that you are struck with sudden fear at my coming. You need not fear me, or speak an ill-boding word; I come not as though willing to do any violent act, since I am an old man, and know that I am come to the most powerful city of Greece. I was sent to persuade this man to follow me to the Theban land; and not by one, but I was commanded by all the Thebans to undertake the task; for my affinity to him obliges me more than any other to la-

[f] *Nereides who have a hundred feet.*] They are the daughters of Nereus, son of Oceanus and Tethys, and are said to be fifty in number.

ment his misfortunes. But, O miserable Oedipus, hear me and come home, for the whole people of Thebes call thee as they justly ought, and I so much the more justly than all the rest, as I grieve the more for your present evils, otherwise I were the worst of men; for I see thee, a miserable stranger, a continual wanderer, wanting all support but such as a wretched maiden can give. Alas, poor princess! I never thought she should fall into such an abyss of misery, into which the unhappy maid is fallen, whose lot is always to provide the sustenance of life for you with poor diet; so big and yet unmarried, and is exposed to the injuries of every stranger. Sad, indeed, is that reproach! O, wretched, I have reproached thee myself, and all our race, but it is impossible to conceal things that are so plain. Now thou, by our father's gods, obey me, Oedipus, submit to me and willingly return to your city, the palace of your ancestors, bidding farewell to this city; for it is fit your father's house have most of your esteem, to which you owe your education.

Oed. O thou who durst do all things, and who concealest in every fair word some subtle contrivance, why dost thou attempt those things, and wouldest a second time plunge me into my former miseries, that I might again renew my grief? Before, when I laboured with so many domestic evils, when it would have even been a pleasure to me to depart the land, you would not grant me that favour, though I desired; but, when oppressed with sorrow, I panted for ease, and would lay down the weight, and lead my life at home, understanding my rage proceeded too far; then you expelled me and drove me into exile. Where was then this boasted esteem for your relation? But now again when you see this city and the people my friends, you strive to draw me hence, and mildly speak the harshest things: and thus, in making offers of your love to

those who slight it, you resemble him who will give nothing nor assist thee at thy urgent suit, but when your mind is satisfied with those things which you before desired, then should make offers of his gifts, when they can merit no thanks; would you not call that a needless favour? And such gifts thou offerest me, in bare pretences good, but bad in fact. I shall lay before these the proofs of thy baseness. Thou comest to lead me away, not to my own palace, but to place me near the borders of the city, that it might be free from harms from this land, but you will never be so fortunate: but, on the contrary, my evil genius will always infest your country, and my sons will only have so much of my land as will serve them to die in. Do I not better understand the fate of the Thebans than you? Very much; by so much as those are wiser of whom I am informed, [g] Apollo, and Jove, who is his sire. Thou comest hither prepared with a lying tongue, and much violence of speech, but thou shalt gain more harm than safety by thy talk. Begone, for in those enterprizes thou wilt not prevail, and suffer me to live here, for we do not live unhappy if we are content.

[g] *Apollo, and Jove, who is his sire.*] The ancients thought that Apollo only delivered those oracles to men which he received from his father Jove, as Æschylus saith in his Suppliants.

> Στέλλειν ὅπως τάχιστα· ταῦτα γὰρ πάλῃ
> Ζεὺς ἐγκαθεὶς Λοξίᾳ.
>
> Send quickly, send, for so my Jove, inspired,
> Phœbus commands. *H. H.*

On the same account in the Eumenides, when he brings in Apollo commanding men to reverence his own oracles, he adds, they must also pay due respect to those of Jupiter, without mentioning any of the other prophetic deities; his words are these: —

> Κἀγώ τε χρησμὸς τοὺς ἐμούς τε καὶ Διὸς
> Ταρβεῖν κελεύω.
>
> To mine and Jove's most sacred oracles
> Pay due obeisance *H. H.*

Cre. Dost thou think that thy afflictions fall more heavy on me than on thyself, that thus thou talkest?

Oed. It would be my great comfort if thou wert neither able to persuade me, nor these my friends.

Cre. O unhappy wretch, although advanced in age thou shewest no proofs of thy understanding, but even in old age maintainest thy folly.

Oed. Thou art bitter in speech, but I know no just man that always speaks well.

Cre. These things differ, to speak much and speak seasonably.

Oed. How short but seasonable thou speakest this?

Cre. Not for them who are of your mind.

Oed. Begone, for I will speak for these; neither regard me, nor stay any longer where I should dwell.

Cre. I call these to witness, and not you, what words thou shalt answer for to your friends, if I take thee.

Oed. Who should take me by force from these my companions?

Cre. But when absent from them, then thou shalt suffer.

Oed. How dost thou think to execute what thou hast threatened?

Cre. Of your two daughters I have just now taken one, and sent her away; and this, likewise, I will speedily take.

Oed. Woe is me!

Cre. Thou soon shalt have a greater cause to lament. [*Takes hold of Antigone.*

Oed. Hast thou my child?

Cre. Aye, but I will not have her long.

Oed. O strangers, what will you do? Will you betray me? Will you not drive this impious wretch out of the land?

Cho. Hence, begone quickly, stranger; thou dost not justly these things, nor what thou didst before.

Cre. Let it be your business to take her away, though against her will, if she will not go freely.

[*To his guards.*

Ant. Woe is me, a wretch! whither shall I flee? What help shall I find from God or man?

[*They take her.*

Cho. What dost thou, stranger?

Cre. I will not touch this man, but my own niece.

Oed. O governors of the land.

Cho. O, stranger, thou dost not justly.

Cre. Aye, justly.

Cho. How justly?

Cre. I lead my own away.

ANTISTROPHICA STROPHE.

Ant. O city.

Cho. What dost thou, stranger? If thou wilt not let her go, thou shalt prove the strength of my hands.

Cre. Keep me off.

Cho. I will, so that thou shalt not discommend me.

Oed. Thou resistest the city, if thou injurest me.

Cho. Did I not foretel the consequence?

Cre. Let the maid go quickly from your hands.

[*The Chorus take Antigone from Creon and his followers.*

Cho. Command not where thou dost not rule.

Cre. I tell thee let her go.

Cho. But I bid thee begone. Come forth, come inhabitants; the city is destroyed, my city by force; come hither to my help.

Ant. I am dragged away, a wretch, O strangers, strangers.

[*Creon's followers seize Antigone again.*

Oed. Where art thou, my daughter?

Ant. Taken away by force.

Oed. O daughter, stretch out thy hands.

Ant. But I cannot.

Cre. Will you not lead her hence?

Oed. O me, unhappy wretch!

Cre. No longer shall you walk by these supporters. [*Antigone carried off.*] But since you will prevail against your country and friends, of whom commanded I do this, and being likewise a king, do prevail; but, in time, thou shalt know that neither thou dost now do well for thyself, nor what you did before against the will of your friends, gratifying thy anger which is always hurtful to thee.

Cho. Stay here, stranger.

Cre. I charge you touch me not.

Cho. I will not let you go, since you have deprived me of them.

Cre. You shall soon lay down a greater ransom for the whole city, for I will not only take these.

Cho. What wilt thou enterprize?

Cre. I will take him and lead him away.

Cho. It is dreadful what thou sayest.

Cre. And that shall be now done, unless the king of the country hinder me.

Oed. Base slave, wilt thou touch me?

Cre. I command thee to hold thy peace.

Oed. Let not the goddesses of our land restrain my tongue from cursing thee, who hast taken away my child, the only eye I have, by force; that that loss might be further added to my before lost eyes. But may the sun, the god who sees all things, grant that thou and thy kindred may lead such a life in old age as I do.

Cre. Behold this, inhabitants of this land.

Oed. They see both me and thee, and understand, that indeed injured, I defend myself by words.

Cre. I will not restrain my anger, but I will lead thee away by force, though alone, and oppressed with age.

ANTISTROPHE.

Oed. Woe is me, a wretch!

Cho. What confidence hadst thou to come hither? Thinkest thou to effect thy cursed designs?

Cre. I think so.

Cho. If thou dost, I count this no more a city.

Cre. In a just cause the small overcome the great.

Oed. Do you hear what he saith?

Cho. But he shall not do so.

Cre. Jove may know that, not thou.

Cho. Is not this a reproach?

Cre. A reproach, indeed, yet must be borne.

Cho. Hoa! all the city, all the leaders; leaders, come with speed, since they proceed too far.

ACT II. SCENE III.

Theseus, Oedipus, Chorus, Creon.

Thes. What noise is this? What is the matter? Out of what fear didst thou call me [h] from sacrificing oxen at the altar to the marine god, the guardian of this hill? speak, that I may know all on account whereof I came hither, with quicker steps than easy to my feet.

Oed. O most beloved friend, I know your voice; I have suffered dreadful things just now from this man.

Thes. What are they who hath injured thee? Speak.

Oed. This Creon, whom thou seest, comes, and hath taken away of my children the sole comfort of my age.

Thes. What sayest thou?

[h] *From sacrificing oxen.*] The contrivance of the poet is here admirable, in supposing Theseus, at the time of this dispute, to have been at Neptune's altar offering sacrifices, and to have heard the clamour; and this saves the trouble of repeating to him the whole matter.

Oed. Thou hast heard what I have suffered.

Thes. Therefore let some of the servants with all speed go to the altars, and assemble all the people, both horse and foot, from the sacrifices, that quitting all affairs, they may hasten to the place where two roads meet, lest the girls pass by; for I were a laughing-stock to this stranger should I be subdued by violence. Go with speed as I have commanded you; but this man, since I came in anger, of which he is worthy, I will not suffer to escape my hands without a wound. And now by the same law by which he came hither, shall he be treated; thou shalt not go out of this land before thou bringest them, and setest them before me. Since thou hast both dishonoured me, the memory of thy parents, and thy own country: who coming into a city which exerciseth justice, and doth nothing contrary to law; afterwards, despising the laws of the country, intruding into it by force, didst take away what thou wouldst, didst use open force, and suppose that my city was destitute of subjects, or enslaved; and even myself am nothing in thy eyes. Thebes did not instruct thee in these principles, for it is not used to bring up unjust men, nor would it commend you, if it understood you ravished what belongs to me and the gods by force, bringing away miserable supplicants. If I were to go into your country, though I had the most just of reasons, without the king of the country's leave, whosoever he is, I would not draw away by force nor take ought, but should know how a stranger ought to behave himself among the citizens. But thou shamest unworthily this city, and a multitude of years both makes you an old man, and void of understanding. Therefore I commanded before, and now I command, that somebody with the greatest speed bring back the maidens, unless by constraint and unwillingly thou wilt be

[i] an inhabitant of this land: and this I say to thee, my mind agreeing with my words.

Cho. Thou seest, stranger, in what case thou art; as to thy ancestors thou appearest just, but by ill deeds provest thyself base.

Cre. I, neither thinking this city without men, O son of Ægeus, or without counsel (as thou sayest) have done this deed. But knowing this, that no love for my kindred should possess you, so as to maintain them by force against my will; and I knew that you would not receive a parricide and polluted person, who in an incestuous marriage begot an offspring. And I knew likewise that there was such an [k] Areopagus, so well affected to the citizens of this land, as would not suffer such a wanderer to live with them in the city. In confidence of these things I seized this prey. And I had not done it, had he not cursed me and my race with bitter imprecations: wherefore I, suffering, thought fit to act thus in return; for anger is a passion which death alone can extirpate, since no grief disturbs the dead. Wherefore do thou what thou wilt; since solitude, while I say what is just, makes me little; though of this age I will endeavour to resist these practices.

Oed. O shameless confidence! whom dost thou think thou reproachest? Me, who am an old man,

[i] *An inhabitant of this land.*] *Gr.* μέτοικος. Upon which the Scholiast says, μέτοικος καλεῖται τὰς ἀπὸ ἑτέρας χώρας μεταβαίνοντας, καὶ καταοικοῦντας ἐν ἑτέραις, *i. e.* they are called μέτοικοι, Metoicoi; who come from one country to inhabit in another. Yet they were more properly called μέτοικοι, who came from other countries and fixed at Athens. And Theseus instituted a sacrifice for their sake, called μετοίκια, which was celebrated on the 16th day of Hecatombæon.

[k] *Areopagus.*] *Gr.* Ἄρειος πάγος, or ἀρειοπάγος, literally, a hill of Mars. It was a council at Athens, which consisted of judges who determined capital matters, and near it was a temple of Mars.

or yourself, who hast with much freedom of speech ran over murders, marriages, and calamities, which I unfortunate unwillingly endured? for so it pleased the gods I should, being angry on some account with our former race. But in myself thou canst not find out any offence, worthy reproach, by which I have offended against myself or my kindred. For if any oracle was delivered to my father that he should die by his children, how can you justly reproach me with that, who was not as yet sprung from the seed of my father and mother, but was then unborn? But if I was born miserable, as I was, (for I fell into the hands of my father and killed him, not knowing what I did, or against whom,) how canst thou justly blame an involuntary crime? But art thou not ashamed to force me to mention my marriage with my mother, she being thy sister? Which I shall soon speak of, nor will I now be silent, since thou hast given a loose to thy licentious tongue: she bore me, O miseries! being ignorant; yet she bore me, and bore to me an offspring a reproach to herself. But one thing therefore I know, that thou willingly reproachest her and me with these things, though unwillingly I married her, with grief I mention it; but neither for this marriage can I be justly reproached, nor for my father's murder, which you always object against me with opprobrious language. Only answer me one thing which I inquire; imagine one should stand ready prepared to kill you, being a just man, wouldst thou inquire if he was thy father who was about to kill thee, or wouldst thou immediately punish him? I think if thou lovedst thy life, thou wouldst punish the author of thy danger, nor consider whether it is just or not. These evils I myself ran into, the gods driving me on; for which I believe my father, were he alive, would not condemn me. But although thou art unjust, thou thinkest thou speakest every word right,

whether it be fit to be mentioned or not: thou reproachest me before these, and art pleased to flatter the name of Theseus and Athens thus, that it is well inhabited; but while thus thou praisest it, many things thou forgetest, that this is the most religious of all the cities wheresoever the gods are worshipped, from whence thou stealest me a suppliant old man, and makest a captive of me, and goest away, taking my daughters. Wherefore I come calling upon our goddesses, and beseech them with supplications, that they would come assistants to me, and make you know by what men this city is guarded.

Cho. This stranger seems a good man, O king! but his calamities are miserable, and worthy to be pitied.

Thes. Enough of words; those that went hence make haste away, and do we stand still who have thus suffered?

Cre. What, therefore, dost thou command a weak old man to do?

Thes. To lead the way, and I will go thy companion, that if in these places thou hast our maids, thyself mayest shew me where they are; but if your companions seized of them, escape, nothing can I do; for others shall hasten and apprehend thy companions, who shall not be able to escape out of this land, that they may pray to your gods. But go before and know what state thou art in, and how fortune hath caught thee in those snares which thou didst lay for others. Possessions are not to be kept by unjust frauds, nor shall you find me otherwise as to this affair, since I have found thee neither come naked nor unprepared for so great an affront, with all this boldness. But there is something in which confiding thou hast offered this violence, which I must find out, and not suffer the city to be overcome by one man. Knowest thou ought of these things? or do they seem to thee now spoke in

vain, as when thou first didst conceive this fraud they would have seemed.

Cre. Thou hast spoken nothing to me worthy of blame. But at home we shall know what is fit to be done.

Thes. Now go away and threaten, but thou Oedipus remain here quiet, being confident that unless I die, I will not cease before I make thee master of thy children.

Oed. May the gods prosper thee for this noble act, and for your just care for me.

ACT II. SCENE IV.

Chorus, STROPHE.

Cho. [l] I wish I were where crowds of enemies do mix together in loud-roaring battle, or [m] at the Pythian, or the [n] bright shores, where the venerable priestesses look after the sacrifices of Ceres for men, and whose tongue the golden [o] key of the Eumol-

[l] *I wish I were where crowds.*] The Chorus, supposing Creon to come with a power, in order to force away Oedipus, and that Theseus would defend him, concluded there would of necessity be a battle between them, therefore wishes he might be a spectator of it.

[m] *At the Pythian.*] *i.e.* At the altar of Pythian Apollo, in Marathon, which was about ten miles from Athens, famous for Theseus's victory over the Marathonian bull.

[n] *Bright shores.*] Shining from the light of the torches and mystic fire, made use of in the rites of Ceres, in Eleusina.

[o] *Key of the Eumolpian priests.*] Because those mysteries are not to be revealed, the tongue is, as it were, locked with keys. They were sacred to Ceres and her daughter Proserpine. Some think they were instituted by Ceres herself; others are of opinion that the first Eumolpus introduced them, but Acesodorus assures us it was a fifth from him; for he writes that Eleusis was first inhabited by natives, then by Thracians, who came in with Eumolpus to assist him in the wars against Erechtheus, where he begat Ceryx; and he begat Eumolpus the second, he Antiphemus, he

pian priests closeth up, where I suppose warlike Theseus and the two unmarried sisters will join in battle with a loud clamour in these countries.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Will they approach at the [p] western side of the rock of Niphas, in the verdant pastures of Oeta? They shall neither escape with horses nor swift chariots, but shall be taken: for terrible is the violence of our inhabitants, terrible the vigour of the Athenians; every rein displays its lustre; all hasten to ascend the horses, well adorned with various trappings, who honour Minerva, the rider, and Neptune, the beloved son of Rhea.

STROPHE II.

Do they now act, or delay? How doth my mind presage that Creon will quickly deliver the maid who suffered sad affliction for her kindred? Jupiter performs something every day. I am a prophet of fortunate wars. O that I were a nimble dove, that, with a speedy flight, I might ascend the clouds of the sky, to see what my mind presages concerning this battle.

ANTISTROPHE II.

O Jupiter, governor of all the gods! who beholdest all things! grant the rulers of this land, with a victorious power, to overcome this troop, which is

Musæus, the Poet, and he Eumolpus the third, who instituted the mysteries of Ceres and Proserpine, and the order of priests called Eumolpidæ. The same author says they were observed every year.

[p] *Western side of the rock of Niphas.*] He means here Mount Ægaleos, it being the utmost western boundary of this people, dividing them from the Messenians. He sums up the places where it is most probable the fight should be between Creon and Theseus, at the rock of Niphas, called the smooth rock, or the hill of Ægaleos.

an easy prey. Thee, venerable maid, Pallas Minerva, and Apollo, the hunter, I invoke, and his sister Diana, the pursuer of spotted nimble deers, I beseech you to come with your divine assistance both to this country and the citizens.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Chorus, Oedipus.

Cho. O, wandering stranger, you will not say to me, who see what I foretel, that I am a false prophet, for I see the maids now approaching near again.

Oed. Where, where, what sayest thou?

ACT III. SCENE II.

Antigone, Ismene, Theseus, Oedipus, Chorus.

Ant. O father, father, which of the gods granted you to see the best of men who sent us hither to you?

Oed. O daughter, are you here?

Ant. The hands of Theseus, and the dear companions of his arms, preserved us.

Oed. Come to your father, child, and support this body which had given up all hope.

Ant. You ask what you may obtain; this favour suits with our desire.

Oed. Where, therefore, where are you?

Ant. We both approach together.

Oed. Most beloved!

Ant. Everything suits with our father's desire.

Oed. O supporters of your father!

Ant. But unhappy supporters of an unhappy father.

Oed. I have now recovered my dear children, nor should I be most unhappy though I died, while you are near me. Support, my child, my right side, keep by your father, ease me who was before a forsaken and miserable wanderer, and tell me all that was done, as short as may be, for a short discourse suits best your age.

Ant. This is he who preserved us; it is fit to hear him, father, and so will my business be short.

Oed. O Theseus, wonder not what pleases me, for my children coming unhoped for, I prolong my speech. I know that this satisfaction could not proceed to me from any other besides you, for thou hast preserved her, and no other; and may the gods grant all the good I wish you and this land, since, by experience, I am taught to prove, that piety with you alone, of all men, dwells; and equity and truth. knowing this, therefore, with these words I testify, that what I possess I possess by you and no other. Stretch forth to me, my lord, thy right hand, that I may touch and kiss thee, if it be just. But, what do I say? why should I, being a miserable man, desire to touch a man in whom there is no spot of guilt? I will not let you go; for it is fit those only of all men who are experienced in ills should grieve for others. But thou, from henceforth, partake my joy; and, hereafter, let me feel the same good effects of your protection as to this day I have.

The. I wonder not why thou hast enlarged thy discourse, delighted with thy children, nor that before me thou hast received the tale from them which I had to tell. We conceive no grief from thence, for we do not strive that our lives should be famous more by words than deeds, and of this my deeds have given good proof, for we have been false to none of those promises which we have sworn to execute, but come bringing them safe and pure from

all things which were threatened.——How that contest was ended why should I boast, which you may know yourself from these? But revolve upon the words which just now were told me, as I came hither, which, though they seem but trifling, yet deserve your wonder, for men ought to neglect nothing that is to be done.

Oed. What is it? tell me, who know nought of those things you inquire of.

The. They say, some man, no countryman of yours, but a relation, sits at the altar of Neptune, where I was sacrificing before I came hither.

Oed. Who is he? What doth he desire by sitting down there?

The. I know but one thing, as they tell me, he desireth some short discourse with you, in no proud manner.

Oed. What is it? for his sitting at the altar is not on a small account.

The. They tell you he comes to discourse with you, and desires the liberty to retire safely the same way again.

Oed. Who should it be who sits at this altar?

The. Think if you have any relation among the Argives who should desire to obtain that request of you.

Oed. Most loved of men, stay where you are.

The. What has happened to you?

Oed. Ask not.

The. Tell me what is the matter.

Oed. I know, having heard of these, who he is that stands there.

The. Who is he? Him whom I have reprimanded?

Oed. My hated son, O king, whose discourse I could the worst of all men's bear to hear.

The. How; can you not hear and not act against

your inclinations? How can it be troublesome to you only to hear?

Oed. That voice comes as the most detested to his father's ears. Put me not to the necessity of submitting to your demand.

The. But, if this suppliant's habit enforces it, consider if reverence to the gods is not to be observed.

Ant. Father, yield to me, though I am young I will advise; suffer Theseus to gratify his mind and the God as he desires, and submit that my brother should come; be of courage, he will not force you from your opinion, though he should speak to you some unbecoming speeches. What injury is it to hear words? For the most excellent contrivances are first framed in the mind, then thoughts instruct the tongue to utter them by words. Thou didst beget him, so that it is not justice for you to repay ill to him, although his deeds to you were most impious and vile. But admit him, for others have had bad children, and anger as fierce hath raged in other breasts, yet, moved by the intreaties of their friends they have been quite overcome. But thou, regard not thy father and mother's injuries, for which you have suffered, if you pass them by, yet I am sure you will discern how destructive is the event of vile anger, for you have a sad evidence of this, too plain to be disputed, that you are deprived of your eyes. But, comply with us, for those who make but just demands should not be forced earnestly to intreat, nor should yourself be well treated, and not know how to repay the kindness.

Oed. My child, your speeches overcome me by an uneasy pleasure, but let it be as it pleaseth thee; only, stranger, if he comes hither, let none overcome me.

The. It is enough I hear you speak once, I will

not boast, but know you will be safe if the gods preserve me.

Epodica Strophe.

Cho. Whosoever desires more than a moderate share of life, he, in my judgment, but indulgeth his folly, since a long series of succeeding days doth only serve to multiply misfortunes. It is not possible for him to see delight who grasps at more than is convenient; whose desire is not perfectly accomplished before death comes; when unmarried destiny uncelebrated in choirs, and final death appears.

Antistrophe.

Not to be born at all overcomes all arguments for life; but since he is born to return thither whence he came as soon as possible, merits the second praise. For when we are arrived at youthful years, attended with vain desires, who can escape many sorrows? Who is not immersed in troubles, murders, seditions, strifes, quarrels, and envies? Then detested, final, infirm, morose, and unfriendly old age oppresseth us, that we are plunged in numberless evils.

Epode.

Wherein I unhappy man am not alone tormented; for, as the northern shore on every side is battered by the winter waves, so terrible and tempestuous storms of fate and perpetual evils always torment Oedipus, some from the rising of the sun, some from the setting, others from the [q] dark Riphæan mountains.

[q] *Dark Riphæan mountains.*] They are called dark, because they lie westward where the day closeth and night comes in.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Antigone, Oedipus.

Ant. And now this stranger comes alone to us, and from his eyes dischargeth floods of tears.

Oed. Who is he?

Ant. Polynices is here hard by, according as my mind presaged.

ACT IV. SCENE II.

Polynices, Antigone, Oedipus, Chorus.

Pol. [r] Woe is me! what shall I do? Whether, O children, shall I first mourn my own evils, or my father's, of which my eyes are witnesses, whom on a strange land I have found with you here exposed, with such a habit in which a filthiness appears that testifies thy wretched state? But on thy yet more wretched head deprived of eyes, thy hair is exposed to the injuries of wind and sun; and, as it seems, the food which he eats is like the habit which he wears. This I a miserable wretch too lately learned, and declare, that though the worst of men, I came out of care for your preservation, lest you should see your evils still increasing. But reverence stands at the throne of Jove in all deeds which are done there, and before thee, father, should it stand likewise; for there are remedies for offences, but no defence. Why art thou silent? Speak something, father, turn not away from me. Will you not answer me any thing? But, in contempt, send me

[r] *Woe is me! what shall I do?*] Observe the cunning of Polynices, who doth not begin with a request, but to get favour of his father seems first to pity his miseries.

away without speaking, nor speak why you are angry? O children of this man, but my sisters, try but to move my father's morose and inaffable aspect, lest answering never a word he sends me away dishonoured, and a suppliant of Neptune.

Ant. But speak thou wretch, on what account thou art here, for many words causing pleasure or offence, or exciting our pity, even extort speech from the dumb.

Pol. I will speak, for well thou admonishest me; first, calling the god to my assistance, from whom the governor of this land hath encouraged me to come hither, granting me liberty to speak and hear, with leave in safety to depart hence; and the same leave would I obtain from you strangers, from my sisters, and father. But why I come, I will tell thee, father; I am expelled my native country as a fugitive, because I thought fit I should sit in your all-governing throne, being the elder. Wherefore Eteocles, the younger, drove me from my country, nor overcame me with arguments, nor came to proof of hands or deeds, but by persuading the city, of which evils I think your fury persecuting me is chiefly the cause; for afterwards I heard the same from the prophets. But when I came to Doric Argos, bringing Adrastus, my father-in-law, I joined to myself some sworn friends, who are called the chief of the distant land, and are much honoured for their skill in war; that, assembling my forces with seven leaders against Thebes, I might either die in the cause of justice, or cast out of the land those who did these things. But let this pass, I will speak why I am come, I address my suppliant prayers to you and those of my allies in war; who now with seven ranks, and seven files of spears, surround the Theban country, as warlike Amphiaraus, who bears the prize in war, and the art of soothsaying; the second is Æteolus Tydeus, the son

of Æneus; the third, Eteoclus, an Argive; the fourth, Hippomedon, his father Talaus sent; the fifth, Capaneus boasts that he will quickly waste with destruction the city of Thebes; the sixth is Parthenopæus Arcas, being named from his mother, who was before a virgin, the faithful son of Atalus. I yours, though not yours, but son of ill-fortune, but called yours, do lead an intrepid army from Argos against Thebes. We all beseech you, for your children's sake, and their safety, praying you to quit your grievous anger against me, who am hasting the punishment of my brother, who expelled me and deprived me of my kingdom: for, if there be any faith in oracles, to whom thou art joined, to those it is said the victory should belong. Now, I beseech you, [s] by the fountains which yield refreshing draughts, and by our kindred gods, to yield to me, and quit your anger, for we are beggars and strangers; and thou a stranger, and live here flattering others, thou and I having had the same fortune. But he reigning supreme in the royal palace, (woe is me!) sporting himself with our miseries, lives delicately, whom, if you agree to my mind, with little pride and as little labour, I will destroy. So I will lead thee back again, and place thee in thy palace myself, casting him out by force. And this, if you agree with me, I may boast that I will perform; but without you I have no hope of safety.

Cho. Answer this man what is convenient, for the sake of him who sent him, then send him back again.

Oed. But unless the governor of this land had sent him to me, desiring me to hear his words, he had never heard my voice; but now since he is thought worthy by Theseus, he shall go hence, first

[s] *By the fountains, &c.*] As though he adjured him by the waters which nourished him, saith the Scholiast.

hearing from me such things as will not cheer him. When thou, base man, didst possess the sceptre and throne, (which thy brother now possesseth in Thebes,) thyself didst drive out thy father, and made me an exile, and to wear those garments which now thou weepest to see, because thou art in the same affliction with me. This is not the object of my grief, but of my patience, that I may live in remembrance of thee, a parricide. For thou hast made me accustomed to those misfortunes; thou hast expelled me, it is through thee I wander, so that I am forced to ask of others my daily food. And unless I had begat those two daughters for my nurses, I had not still been, as to thy part; but now they preserve me, they are my nurses, they are men, not women, in bearing part of my sufferings; but thou art begotten of another, and not of me. Wherefore, though no god yet lets loose his vengeance against thee, it will not be long, if these troops move towards the city of Thebes; for you will have no reason to boast your overthrowing that city, but first shall fall all stained with blood, and your brother likewise; for so the curses import which I before pronounced against you; and now I likewise implore the same curses against you, that you may learn to revere your parents, and may not dishonour your blind father, because you were begotten of such. These did not so, wherefore your throne and kingdom they will possess, if the anciently celebrated vengeance sits on Jove's throne, according to the laws. But thou begone, contemptible wretch, and forsaken of me; [t] taking with thee these curses which I call for

[t] *Taking with thee these curses.*] The Scholiast tells us, that the reason of Oedipus's laying these curses on his children was as follows: it being the usual custom with them from every sacrifice to send Oedipus a shoulder, they, through negligence or forgetfulness, sent him a thigh; in which, thinking himself despised, like a

against you. May you neither possess your father's country by war, nor return to Argos, but die with your brother's hand, and kill him by whom you were expelled. Such imprecations I pronounce, and call against you the hated darkness of hell that it may give you room; and I invocate these goddesses, and the god of war, to send mortal hatred between you. Now, having heard these things, be gone, and tell all the Thebans, and your friends likewise, and faithful comrades, what gifts Oedipus hath distributed to his sons.

Cho. O Polynices, I do not congratulate your arrival here; now return back with all speed.

Pol. Woe to my coming! woe to my companions! unhappy hour in which I came from Argos. Unhappy I whom none of my companions may speak to, nor may I return again but without speaking! I perish in this condition! O sisters, daughters of Oedipus, since you have heard the terrible things which my father hath imprecated, do not, by the gods, those imprecations relate to you? For which of you thinks to return home? Do not dishonour me, but place me in my sepulchre, and perform my obsequies; and this present praise which you receive for those good offices you pay my father, will still be amplified by your kind assistance to me.

Ant. O Polynices! I beseech you yield to this my one request.

Pol. Dear sister, what is it? Speak.

Ant. Lead back your army with all speed to Argos, and do not destroy thyself and the city.

Pol. But that is not possible, for how can I assemble again the same army if once I flee?

Ant. Why should you again be angry? Or what

passionate and rash man as he was, he cursed them, wishing they might slay one another, which came to pass accordingly.

advantage will accrue to you from the destruction of your country?

Pol. It is base to flee, and that I, being the elder, should be so ridiculed by my brother.

Ant. Thou seest his prophecies, how plain he utters them, who pronounces certain death to you both.

Pol. My brother demands what I can never grant.

Ant. Woe is me, a wretch! who will dare to follow you, hearing what he hath prophesied?

Pol. I will not bring back ill news, since it belongs to a good commander to speak the best, and not to say any thing terrible.

Ant. Are you thus determined?

Pol. Do not detain me, but this expedition will be my care, though unfortunate and crossed by reason of my father and his curses. But may Jove prosper you if you will pay me your last offices being dead, since you can no more assist me alive. But let me now go, and fare you well; for hereafter you shall never see me more alive.

Ant. O miserable!

Pol. Do not bewail me.

Ant. Who would not bewail you, brother, rushing upon death?

Pol. If I must, I will die.

Ant. Do not, but yield to me.

Pol. Counsel not what is not fitting.

Ant. O wretched me, if I am deprived of you!

Pol. It is in the power of God to be born to this or that fortune, but I pray for you never to fall into troubles; for you are unworthy every way to be unfortunate.

ACT IV. SCENE III.

Strophe I.

Chorus, Oedipus, Antigone.

Cho. New and unfortunate evils have happened

to me from that miserable stranger, unless they are what fate decrees must happen; for I will not speak rashly of what the gods decree. Time sees and disposes all things increasing mischief upon others. [u] The air thundered, O Jove. [*Thunder heard.*

Oed. My children, will any of the inhabitants bring me hither good Theseus?

Ant. What design is it for which you call him? this swift thunder will quickly send me to the dead; but send as quick as may be. [*Thunder.*

ACT IV. SCENE IV.

Antistrophe I.

Chorus, Oedipus.

Cho. Behold another hideous thunder rends the sky, an unutterable sound sent by Jove, and fear causeth my hair to stand erected. Celestial lightning flashes again. What end will it produce? I fear the event, for it comes not in vain, nor without some dire portent. O great sky! O Jove!

Oed. O children! the fatal period of my life approaches, and there is no escape.

Cho. How knowest thou that? What ground hast thou for that conjecture?

Oed. I know too well; but as quick as may be, let some one go and conduct the king of this country to me.

Strophe II.

Cho. Alas! alas! behold again an immense thun-

[u] *The air thundered, O Jove!*] As Oedipus had said before there would be signs of his death, either thunder, or lightning, or earthquake; so now, while the Chorus speaks, thunder is heard, as a token of his approaching death. In the unravelling of this plot there is a mechanism used, which is equal with that of the descent of a god; for this storm, which is sent by Jove, supplieth the place of his personal appearance. See the notes upon Ajax, Act I. Scene I.

der, sent by Jove, roars all around. Be favourable, Jove, be favourable. If thou art come to bring adversity upon the earth, may happiness be my lot; nor, because I have seen this miserable man, let me sustain a loss where thanks are due. O Jove, I invoke thee.

Cho. What matter of secrecy would you commit to his breast?

Oed. For the benefits I have received, I would render him due thanks, as I promised.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Cho. Ho; son, approach, if upon the utmost shore of Neptune, the sea-god, you worship the sacred altar on which oxen are slain, come; for this stranger resolves to render due thanks to you, this city, and his friends, for the good turns he received. Make haste, my lord. Fly.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Theseus, Oedipus, Chorus.

Thes. What noise is this again among you that echoes to my ears? the voice is yours, I know, and it is plainly for the stranger's sake. Hath not the thunderbolt of Jove or rain fallen? for all things, when the god thus raiseth tempests, are to be dreaded.

Oed. But is Theseus near? Will he find me alive and in my senses?

Cho. My lord, thy coming answers to our wish; and some god granted you the happy fortune to come now.

Thes. What new thing is this, son of Laius?

Oed. This is the last moment of my life, and of what I have promised I would not defraud you and this city.

Thes. On what certain sign of death dost thou depend?

Oed. The gods themselves, who are never false, declare it me by certain signs.

Thes. How sayest thou, old man, these things are declared?

Oed. By many continual thunderings, and many thunderbolts hurled from the invincible hand of Jove.

Thes. Thou prevailest upon me, for I see thee utter many unerring prophecies. Teach what is to be done.

Oed. I will teach thee, son of Ægeus, things which are perpetually to be established to thee and this city. I will myself lead presently to the place, without a guide, where I must die; [x] but tell not that to any man, nor where my body is, for that place will supply to you the strength of many spears against the foreign arms of the Thebans; but sacred words and unutterable, thyself shalt know, when thou comest thither alone. I would not mention them to any of the citizens, nor to my children, though I love them; and, when thou approachest the end of thy life, declare them only to one, the most excellent man, and let him always declare them to the next succeeding: so shalt thou always inhabit this city, invincible by Theban power. For innumerable cities, where first only justice reigned, have often become unjust; but, the gods, though late, will surely punish the crimes of such, who, forsaking the ways of piety and justice, follow the dictates of an unruly will. But thou, son of Ægeus, let not that be thy case; and this I tell thee, which is no more than thou knowest already. But let us

[x] *But tell not that, &c.*] His design was, in laying this charge on Theseus, that he concealing the thing from all but one, as his eldest son, to whom he is to reveal it, and he to his, and so for succeeding generations, it might ever be a defence of the Thebans against the Athenians.

go to the place, for the present decree of the gods urgeth me, nor need we dread the danger. My children, follow this way, I am now become your guide, as you were before your father's. Be gone, touch me not, but suffer me to find out the sacred tomb where it is my lot to be interred. Go here, lead me here, Mercury, my guide, leads me here, and the infernal goddess. Oh! my dark light, now where art thou? my body now forsakes thee; now I go to breathe out in the grave my last vital breath. But thou, most loved stranger, thou and this country, and thy servants, may you be happy in your posterity, remembering me when dead, and may you be ever fortunate.

ACT V. SCENE II.

Chorus.

If it be lawful for me to worship thee, O [y] invisible goddess, and thee, O Pluto, king of the dead, with prayers I beseech you that this stranger may reach the all-concealing regions of the dead and the Stygian shore, neither with a laborious or a dolorous death: for, since many evils came upon thee wrongfully, may the just god in return bless thee. O subterraneous goddesses, and thee, [z] invincible beast, who (as fame reports) dost lie in the well-fortified gates and barkest from the caves of the dead, invin-

[y] *Invisible goddess.*] *i. e.* Proserpine.

[z] *Invincible beast.*] *Gr.* σώματ' ἀνικήτου θηρὸς, body of the invincible beast, *i. e.* Cerberus; he is feigned to be the porter of hell, and is called by Horace, *Bellua Centiceps*, lib. ii. od. 13. Æn. vi. v. 417. *Plutonis canem ærea voce, quinquaginta Capitum,* Ἅιδου τρίκρανον σκύλακα. In the Trachiniæ, his office is to assign out the places of the dead; the fiction of his three heads is, because all men die one of these three kinds of deaths, either natural, violent, or accidental.

cible porter among the ghosts below, and thee, O son of earth and hell, I beseech, for this stranger, that he may descend quietly to the inferior regions of the dead; [a] and thee likewise I invocate, thou ever-sleeping death.

ACT V. SCENE III.

Messenger, Chorus.

Mess. O citizens, in short I tell you Oedipus is dead; but what is done speech cannot in short declare, nor how things there were acted.

Cho. Is the wretch dead?

Mess. Know that he hath forsaken his tedious life.

Cho. How, by a gentle accident caused by divine power?

Mess. It is much to be admired, for how he went hence, by none of his friends led, thou who wast present knowest; but when he came to a steep way, paved on the ground with brazen steps, he stood in one way which concurred with many near a hollow sink, where lie [b] the faithful pledges of Pirithous and Theseus. Standing between which place and the Thracian rock, and hollow Acherdus, he sat on

[a] *And thee likewise I, &c.*] The Chorus invocates death as the last of all the infernal deities for an easy death for Oedipus.

[b] *The faithful pledges, &c.*] Plutarch, in the life of Theseus, tells us, that there was a strict friendship between him and Pirithous, whom, being in love with Proserpine, he took with him to hell to bring her from thence. But, upon his return, when he would likewise have brought him back, they were parted by an earthquake, and Pirithous was detained, where he is bound with chains.

——— *Amatorem trecentæ*
Pirithoum cohibent catenæ. Hor.

But it is not certain that this was the place.

a stone sepulchre; then he put off his filthy garments, then called to his children and commanded them to bring him [c] washings of flowing water; who going into a high hill where stood a [d] temple sacred to Ceres, in a short time perform the commands of their father: they adorned him with garments, and washed his body, as is usual. But when he had the pleasure of having every thing done, and no slackness appeared, Jove thundered; but the virgins trembled when they heard it, and, falling down before their father's knees, wept, nor ceased from beating their breasts, and tedious lamentations. But he hearing their sorrowful voice, folding his arms round them said, O children, this day you have no more a father; all things to me are nothing, nor shall you take any more anxious care for me, which I know was hard to you. But one word only easeth you of all those cares; there is no man which had more love for you than I, deprived of whom you will lead the remaining part of your life. Dividing such things among each other, all sadly wept; but when they made an end of their mourning, and there was no more clamour heard, a profound silence succeeded, and suddenly a voice called him, which caused all people's hair to stand upright with fear. God's

[c] *Washings of flowing water.*] After the body of the person doomed to die was washed, the next thing was to anoint it, and then it was adorned with a rich and splendid garment. Hence we find Socrates washed himself before he took the fatal draught, and Apollodorus brought him a cloak with a garment of great value, it being the philosopher's own desire to prepare himself for his funeral before he died. But ordinarily this, and almost all offices for the dead were performed by their nearest relations; in conformity to which custom, Oedipus prepares himself for his funeral by washing and adorning his body.

[d] *Temple sacred to Ceres.*] *Gr.* ἐυχλόυ Δήμητρος, flourishing Ceres. She hath this epithet by reason of the greenness of gardens over which she is supposed to preside; she had a temple in the Acropolis, and her sacrifice was a ram generally offered on the sixth day of Thargelion.

voice called him much every where, [c] O thou Oedipus, why do we not depart? thou hast caused much delay. When he understood he was called by God, he bids king Theseus come to him, and when he came, he said, beloved friend give me thy hand, the pledge of friendship to my children; and children, give yours to him; and promise you will never betray them willingly, but that thou wilt do always what thou thinkest is convenient for them. Then he, as a generous man, not out of pity but his noble mind, promised by oath to execute the stranger's will: but, when he had done this, presently Oedipus touching his children with his feeble hands, says, O children, you must with courageous minds depart these places, nor desire to see what is not lawful to be seen, nor hear what is not to be heard. Begone, therefore, with all speed, but let Theseus come and know what is to be done. These things we all heard him speak. Then, dissolved in tears we follow with the maids; but when in a short time we returned, we saw the man no where, but the king covering his eyes, having his hands up to his head, as if some new terrible object were in view not to be seen. After that, in a short time we see him worshipping the earth and Olympus, the seat of the gods, in the same prayer: but by what fate he fell no mortal could declare, but Theseus; for, neither the fire-bearing thunderbolt of Jove killed him, nor waves of the sea then raised by storms, but either some messenger of the gods, or a gentle gradual opening of the earth, caused by the infernal gods. For the man, without one tear free from the power of consuming disease, was snatched away: but, if there be some strange man who will not credit my

[c] *O thou Oedipus, why do we.*] The contrivance of the poet is admirable here, in representing to the mind what cannot easily be expressed in words, *i. e.* the strange and surprising manner in which Oedipus was taken away.

report, I will not assent to him to whom I seem to be mistaken.

Cho. Where are his children and friends who accompanied him?

Mess. They are not far off, for their shrill voices of lamentation discover their approach.

ACT V. SCENE IV.

Antigone, Chorus, Ismene.

Ant. Alas, alas! now it is time for us greatly to lament the loss of our dear father, for whom before we endured much labour. At last unutterable sorrows, which our eyes have witnessed, overwhelm us.

Cho. What are they?

Ant. My friends, beyond compare.

Cho. Is he dead?

Ant. If any wished for Oedipus's death, the fates have granted his desire.

Cho. What his, whom neither war nor sea opposed, but the plain earth invisible seized by an obscure fate!

Ant. O wretched me, destructive night hath overcast our eyes! Shall we, wandering in some foreign land, or on the wide roaring sea, lead our sad lives?

Ism. I know not; may cruel Pluto seize me that I may die with my old father; for I have no desire of longer life.

Cho. O thou two best of children, what God hath ordained ought patiently to be borne. Let not your grief overcome you so; your condition is not so much to be complained of.

Ant. There is some desire of evil, for that which is no way pleasing was pleasing when we possessed it. O, my father, thou art involved in perpetual darkness beneath the earth; though an old man, to me thou wast beloved, and still with me thy memory shall be precious.

Cho. He hath ended his life.

Ant. As he desired to do.

Cho. How?

Ant. On a strange land, as he desired, he hath for ever his dark bed beneath the earth. Nor did he die unlamented, for this my weeping eye for ever will lament thee, father; nor is it in the power of time to banish from my breast such grief. Woe is me! thou shouldst not have died on a strange land, but thou didst die here forsaken.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Ism. Woe is me! What fortune waits me here poor and forsaken, and thee, my sister, deserted of our father?

Cho. But since he happily finished the term of his years, cease from grief; for none is free from evils.

Ant. Sister, let us be gone.

Ism. To do what?

Ant. A desire possesses me.

Ism. What?

Ant. To see the subterranean house.

Ism. Of whom?

Ant. Of my father. O wretched I!

Ism. How is that lawful? Dost thou not see?

Ant. Why dost thou reprimand?

Ism. And now.

Ant. What, again?

Ism. He died without sepulchre, separate from any man——

Ant. Lead me, and kill me there.

Ism. Ah, unhappy I; where, therefore, shall I wander, and, forsaken, lead my life?

Cho. Fear nothing, friends.

Ant. But whither shall I flee?

Cho. Before you fled that no ill should happen to you.

Ant. I think.

Cho. What dost thou think?

Ant. I know not how we shall get home.

Cho. Inquire not that: sorrow hath overwhelmed thee.

Ant. Much before, now beyond measure.

Cho. You are plunged in wide seas of woe.

Ant. Great and unfathomable.

Cho. And that I likewise affirm.

Ant. Alas! alas! whither shall we go? O, Jove, to what small hope hast thou reduced me?

Cho. Cease, virgins, from these lamentations; for those, to whom desired death hath happened, we ought not to lament; it is a fault.

Ant. Son of Ægeus, we adore thee.

Thes. What would you have me to grant you?

Ant. [f] We would see our father's tomb.

Thes. But the liberty is denied you of going thither.

Ant. What sayest thou, king of the Athenians?

Thes. Children, he forbad me either to approach to these places, or to tell any mortal of the sacred tomb which covers him; which command, if I obeyed, he said that I should for ever rule this land, secure from ill; and this your God hath heard, and the oath of Jove, which hears all things.

Ant. If then this be according to his will it sufficeth us, but send us to the [g] Theban city, that we prevent the ruin which threatens our brothers.

[f] *We would see our father's tomb.*] Probably her design in desiring to see the sepulchre was that she might weep over it, which is customary with her sex after the death of their friends, and agrees with the tenderness of their nature.

[g] *Theban city.*] Gr. Θήβας Ὠγυγίας, *i. e.* Ogygian Thebes, so called from Ogyges, or Ogygus, the most ancient king of Thebes, who repaired and beautified that city. He is said to have been contemporary with the patriarch Jacob, but Hieronymus brings him down to Moses's time. See Dr. Potter's Archæol. Græca on the word Ὠγύγιος, vol. i. p. 25.

Thes. That I will do, and whatsoever else I can, to favour you and him who is lately deceased and lies in his grave; I ought not to be tired by doing well.

Cho. But cease, nor repeat again your lamentation; for all those things were pre-ordained by a divine decree.

THE

TRACHINIÆ.

Dramatis Personae.

HYLLUS.
LICHAS.
A Messenger.
An old Man who followed Hercules from Eubœa.
HERCULES.

WOMEN.

DEIANIRA.
Her Companion or Tutoress.
A Nurse, Maid to Deianira.
Chorus of Trachinian Ladies.

SCENE—Before Ceyx's Palace in Trachin.

THE TRACHINIÆ.

THE ARGUMENT.—*This Tragedy hath its title from the young ladies of Trachis, Trachin, or Trachinia, which composed the Chorus. It is a small country in Phthiotis, one of the four parts of Thessaly, where Ceyx was king. There Hercules banished himself voluntarily, for the murder of Eunomaus, kinsman to his host, and father-in-law to Oeneus. When he came to the river Evenus, with Deianira, his wife, Nessus, the Centaur, carried Deianira over; and, having so done, attempted to ravish her. At which Hercules, enraged, shot him with his arrow, poisoned with the blood of the monster Hydra.*

Nessus, expiring by his wound, told Deianira, that if she would preserve his blood, and dip therein a garment for Hercules, it would for ever attract his love to her from all other women. The credulous Deianira believed the Centaur, and soon found occasion to use this philtre. For Hercules, captivated with the love of Iole, daughter of Eurytus, king of Oechalia, and being denied her by Eurytus; to revenge the affront, feigned some trifling pretence to wage war against him, in which he destroyed Oechalia, put him and his sons to the sword, and brought away Iole. Deianira, perceiving that she was like to be rivalled in the love of Hercules, sent him a garment dipped in the Centaur's blood, by the herald Lichas, to Cenæum, a promontory in Eubœa, where Hercules was preparing to sacrifice to Jupiter Cenæus, for his happy success in the war. Hercules received the garment joyfully; but, when the poison began to work, immediately it stuck so to his flesh that it could not be parted from it. Then succeeded violent convulsions, tearing his flesh and bones, and other sad effects of the poison. In this condition he is brought to Trachinia, where Deianira, hearing the sad news, stabbed herself; and Hercules, having left a strict command with his son, Hyllus, to marry Iole, was burnt on a pile, made for that purpose, on mount Oeta.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Deianira, Tutoress, Hyllus.

Dei. It is an ancient saying famous among men, that [a] we can judge of no man's life, whether it hath been happy or miserable, before he dies; but I know mine to be sad and unfortunate before I reach my grave, who, living in my father Oeneus's house, in [b] Pleuron, suffered more grievous trouble on account of my marriage than any Ætolian lady: for a river was my suitor, Acheloüs I mean, who in his three shapes desired me of my father; now as he walked [c] he plainly seemed a bull, another time a twisted

[a] *We can judge of no man's life.*] This saying was spoken by Solon to Crœsus, king of Lydia, who, shewing Solon all his wealth and soldiers in golden armour, and the golden altar of Apollo, asked him, who of all men he thought happier than he: Solon answered, that Cleobis and Biton were. At which the king grieved, asked whom he thought next in happiness, but still Solon answered another. The king growing more and more uneasy, Solon told him, that a man ought to wait until the last day of his life, before he can tell whether it be happy or miserable. For, added he, the time will come when thou shalt wage war against the Persians, and shalt be sacrificed to their god. Accordingly, being overcome by Cyrus, he was thrown into the fire. While he was burning, he cried out, Solon, Solon; wherefore a shower sent by Apollo put out the fire. Cyrus asked him the reason of that exclamation, who told him the words of Solon; at which Cyrus wondering, dismissed him, and made him his counsellor.

[b] *Pleuron.*] Or Pleurone: it is a city in Ætolia, a part of Greece.

[c] *He plainly seemed a bull.*] All rivers by the ancients were compared to bulls, by reason of the violence of their streams, and roaring noise caused by the waters dashing against the rocks or banks. Hor. lib. iv. od. 14.

Sic tauriformis volvitur Aufidus.

Or else because they divide and tear the earth as bulls; or, lastly, because of the fertile pastures near the sides of rivers.

spotted dragon, another time in human shape with a bull's head: [d] for, from his hairy beard, floods of fountain water flow, and wretched I, expecting such a wooer, ever prayed to die, rather than approach his bed. But after a long time, yet, to my great satisfaction at last, came the famous son of Jove and Alcmena, who engaging with him in a combat, set me free. I cannot speak the manner of the conflict, for I know it not; if any fearless of the spectacle sat by, he may tell; for I was amazed with fear, lest my beauty at last should cause my grief. At last Jupiter, the governor of combats, ordered it well (if well it be) for enjoying the profered bed of Hercules, I am ever tormented with succeeding fears, and ever solicitous for his welfare. In the same night that I receive him, he departs again, one labour still succeeding another; and I have borne children, whom he, as a husbandman taking a far distant field, seeth only in seed-time, and once in harvest. Such a life leads my lord, still coming home, and still returning [e] to serve I know not whom; and, when he is victor in any combat, then chiefly I dread, for since he

[d] *For from his hairy beard.*] There is an image in Virgil like this, where he speaks of Atlas changed by Perseus into a mountain of that name. Æneid iv. v. 250.

——————— *tum flumina mento*
Præcipitant senis, et glacie riget horrida barba.

[e] *To serve I know not whom.*] She means Eurystheus, king of Mycenæ; for, before he and Hercules were born, fate had decreed that he who should be born last must serve the other. Juno, therefore, being step-mother to Hercules, and hating him, caused him to be born last: wherefore he was subject to Eurystheus, and by him sent upon many laborious expeditions, too tedious here to mention. Virgil charges all his labours upon the unkindness of Juno. Æneid viii. v. 291.

——————— *Ut duros mille labores*
Rege sub Eurystheo, fatis Junonis iniquæ,
Pertulit.———

took the life of Iphitus, we live here in Trachin, exiles [f] with a foreign king. But none knows where he is gone, yet hath he left me in sad sorrows for him; and I almost know he hath received some mischief, for it is not a little while, but these ten months and five more, he hath continued absent without sending any message of his return. There is some sad mischief happened to him. He went away, leaving me [g] such a roll, which I often pray to the gods I received of him without any harm.

Tut. O my lady Deianira, I have seen you lament the departure of Hercules with sorrowful sad lamentations; but now, if it be just for those in bondage to admonish the free, and it becomes me to speak so far, how comes it you abound with so many children, but send none in search of thy husband, but chiefly Hyllus, whom it is fit should go, if he hath any care for his father's safety? But now in season he comes home, wherefore if you think I speak in season, now is the time to make use of his help, and my counsel.

ACT I. SCENE II.

Deianira, Hyllus, Tutoress.

Dei. O son! good speeches even from the mouths of the ignoble happen well; for this woman, though a servant, yet hath spoken what might become one who is free.

[f] *With a foreign king.*] *i. e.* Ceyx. Thus Hesiod,

——— Τρηχῖνα δέ τοι παρελαύνων
Ἐς Κήϋκα ἄναχλα———

[g] *Such a roll.*] Hercules, at his departure, left with his wife a tablet, wherein it was written, that if he returned not within fifteen months, she might know that he was dead.

Hyl. What? tell me, mother, if it be ought I may hear with decency.

Dei. That it is a shame for you, your father being so long a stranger, not to inquire where he is.

Hyl. But I know, if one may believe rumours.

Dei. In what part of the earth, my son, do you hear he stays?

Hyl. They say, that, for more than this whole year past, he hath served a woman of Lydia.

Dei. If it were so that he hath suffered this bondage, some might have heard it all.

Hyl. But he is freed from thence, as I hear.

Dei. Where is he, therefore, now reported to be alive or dead?

Hyl. They say he hath undertaken an expedition against the land of Eubœa, and city of Eurytus, or is about it.

Dei. But dost thou know, my son, that he left me some certain oracles concerning that country?

Hyl. What, mother; I know not a word.

Dei. That he must either end his life, or overcome in this trial, and for the future in happiness lead the remaining part of his life: wherefore, my son, now in the very precipice of fate, wilt thou not go and help thy father? since we shall be safe or fall, but as he perishes or preserves his life, we will go together.

Hyl. I go, mother, and if I had known the report of the oracle, long since I had been with him: his accustomed success suffers us not to fear, or be much concerned for him: now, since I know it, nothing I will omit, but search out the whole truth in this affair.

Dei. Go now, my son; for to do well, though late, when he is admonished, brings advantage.

ACT I. SCENE III.

Chorus, Deianira.

Strophe I.

Cho. O thou to whose empire the starry night gives place, but whom, when returned, she conceals in the dark womb, bright ruler of the day, the sun, I thee invoke to declare this to me, where the son of Alcmena abides. O bright burning flame, is he quartered on the islands near the sea, or between the eastern and the western continent? Speak, O thou who excellest in seeing.

Antistrophe I.

For I hear that Deianira with a longing mind for Hercules, and driven alternately from hope to fear, [h] as the miserable bird, never composeth to sleep her weeping eyes: but mindful of her lord, dreads his journey, and, pining away, thinks of her widowed bed, expecting some sad fate.

Strophe II.

As one seeth in the broad sea many waves ebbing and flowing, driven by the unwearied south-west and north wind; so is Theban born Hercules, brought up and exercised in many evils, as the Cretan sea is tossed: but still some of the gods keep him, being unblameable, from the mansions of the dead.

Antistrophe II.

Therefore I will blame thee, and speak words

[h] *As the miserable bird.*] *Gr.* ἄθλιον ὄρνιν, *i. e.* the swallow. See the notes on Electra, Act I. Scene II. If you read ἄλιον ὄρνιν, then it is a halcyon, which hatcheth her young in the rocks near the sea, and weeps when they are flown, and her eggs gone. The comparison of Deianira to either of them is not improper.

which shall be pleasing, though contrary to what you would speak; for I say you ought not to lay aside good hope: nor hath king Jove, who governs all things, given ought to men without pain, but grief and joy encircling flows on all as uncertainly as the paths of Arcturus.

EPODE.

For neither doth the starry night remain with men, nor the fates, nor riches; but suddenly they are gone: to me it is allotted both to rejoice and be again deprived of joy. Which things I say, O queen, ought to support you in hopes; for who thus ever saw Jove void of care for his children?

Dei. Thou seemest to have heard my affliction, and therefore art come to me; but how I suffer, and how my soul languishes, thou knowest not, but still art ignorant: for [i] youth is fed in its own pastures, nor doth the fire of the god, (i. e. love,) nor rain, nor winds disturb them: but in pleasure chooseth a life free from trouble, until any instead of maid is called the youth's wife, and in the night partakes of his cares, fearing for her husband or her children; then may she understand, seeing her own manner of life, with what ills I am oppressed. For many sufferings I have lamented, but one such as never before, I shall mention: when Hercules, my king, went forth upon his last journey from home, then he there left an ancient written tablet, inscribed with certain testaments, which before, though he went out to many combats, he never mentioned to me; but went out

[i] *Youth is fed in its own pastures.*] Nothing disturbs youth, but as a mighty wall it stands unhurt, nor feels the ills which others suffer who are married. Horace makes the like comparison of his mistress, Lyde:

Quæ, velut latis equa trima campis,
Ludit exultim, metuit que tangi,
Nuptiarum expers, &c.

as to perform some exploit, not to die: but now, as though he were no more, he bid me take my share of wealth for a second bed, and mentioned what share of their father's land he divided to his children; and appointing a year and three months time to be absent from his country, said, he must either die in that time, or by escaping to the end of it, lead a life free from sorrow. All this he said was what the gods decreed should come to pass concerning the labours of Hercules, as, he said, the ancient [k] beech tree, at Dodona, spoke, and the two doves. And certainly this day hath seen the accomplishment of this oracle, and all is past. This makes me, O my friends, in my sweet sleep trembling, start out for fear, that I must live deprived of the best of men.

Cho. Good words, I pray; for I see some man coming crowned to speak with joy.

ACT I. SCENE IV.

Messenger, Deianira, Chorus.

Mess. O Deianira, my queen, I, the first messenger, free you from fear; for know the son of

[k] *Beech tree at Dodona, and the two doves.*] Near Dodona, a city of Chaonia, in Epirus, there was a temple and grove of oaks and beeches consecrated to Jupiter Dodonæus, and in it a particular beech-tree, upon which two doves sate and prophesied: others say they were rather ancient priestesses, and called pigeons, by reason of the greyness of their hair: for the Molossi, of Epirus, called all ancient people grey, or πολιὰς. Herodotus gives another reason why they were called doves, viz. because they being barbarians spoke like birds. Euripides says they were three, others two, and that one of them came from Thebes to the oracle of Jupiter Ammon, in Libya, and the other to Dodona. See Dr. Potter's Archæol. Græc. vol. i. p. 266, &c.

Alcmena is alive and victorious, and hath brought from the fight [1] first-fruits, worthy the gods.

Dei. What speech is this, old man, thou talkest to me?

Mess. That your much-loved lord will soon appear at home with a victorious army.

Dei. Sayest thou so? And hast thou learnt this of citizens or strangers?

Mess. Lichas, the herald, in yon verdant pasture, declared it, and, hearing it of him, I flew, that, first telling you this pleasant news, I might both gain some reward and enjoy your favour.

Dei. If he be well, why, therefore, is he absent?

Mess. It is not with much pleasure to himself, my lady, for all the people of Melia standing round examine him; nor hath he power to hasten his coming, for every one, desiring to know what they hoped for, suffered him not to go, ere they were satisfied with hearing; and he, though unwillingly, stays with those who are desirous to keep him; but soon thou wilt see him.

Dei. O Jove, who presidest over Oeta's verdant pastures, thou hast given us joy, though after a long time! Ye matrons, shout for joy, both you who are in your houses and who are without, for an unhoped for light of fame is risen which I now enjoy.

Epodica Strophe.

Cho. Ye bachelors, let the voice of joy be heard in your houses! and ye husbands, join your voices

[1] *First-fruits, worthy the gods.*] *i.e.* Spoils, perhaps, which were to be offered to Ζηνὶ τροπαίῳ, for the ancient heroes always offered up the chief and most valuable part of the spoils to the gods, to whose help they thought the victory was due. Thus, in the Philoctetes, Hercules charged that prince to offer at his altar the first-fruits of the spoils which they took from Troy, as a tribute due to him, for the assistance of his arrows in taking that city.

in the concert! Apollo, well armed with a quiver, the great god of Pæans.

ANTISTROPHE.

Ye virgins, celebrate with hymns! and his [m] Ortygian sister, likewise, the huntress of deers, fire-bearing Diana, and her neighbouring nymphs. O I am transported with ecstatic joy, nor will I refuse the sound of music, O sovereign of my breast.

EPODE.

Behold, rapture disturbs me, and sends me to join the troop of Bacchanals, Io Pæan! Io Pæan! Behold, dear lady, now may you plainly see joys, contrary to your former fears.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Deianira, Chorus.

Dei. I see, dear ladies, nor is the vigour of my eyes so far decayed that I cannot see this troop; wherefore, joy to the herald who late appears, if he brings any good news.

ACT II. SCENE II.

Lichas, with a Train, Deianira, Messenger, Chorus.

Lich. Well, are we come, and joyfully, speak, O lady, according, as the matter requires; for the man who prospers ought to speak joyful words.

Dei. Most loved of messengers, teach me what I

[m] *Ortygian sister.*] Ortygia is the same with Delos, the place where Diana was born and worshipped, whence she is called here Ἄξιεμιν Ὀρτυγίαν.

first would know, whether I shall receive Hercules alive or not.

Lich. I left him alive, strong, and in health, nor grieved with any disease.

Dei. Where; in his father's, or any barbarian land? Speak!

Lich. There is a shore in Eubœa where he hath set up altars, and hath sacrificed first-fruits to [n] Cenæan Jove.

Dei. Is it to perform some vows, or by decree of some oracle?

Lich. Vows: for he overcame in war the rebellious country of women, which you see with your eyes.

Dei. Now, by the gods, who is their rightful lord, and who are they? They are miserable unless their fortunes deceive me.

Lich. These he, having destroyed the city of Eurytus, took, slaves for himself, selected for the gods.

Dei. Was he at this city so long time since his departure hence?

Lich. No; but the most part of his time he spent in Lydia; as himself says, himself not free, but sold; nor ought you to blame that of which Jove was the author, for he, being bought by Omphale, the Barbarian, completed a year in her service, as himself says. He was so stung by that reproach, that, with an oath, he swore he would bring into bondage, with his wife and children, him who was the author of his sufferings; nor did his words prove vain, but, when he was pure from the slaughter of Iphitus, taking an army, which he had raised on purpose, he came to the city of Eurytus; for he

[n] *Cenæan Jove.*] Cenæum was a promontory in Eubœa sacred to Jupiter, as, indeed, were all mountains, he being ὕψιστος Θεὸς, the supreme God, and there it was usual to sacrifice to him.

said that he, of all men, was the only cause of his affliction, who, when he came to his house an old guest, provoked him with many reproaches, speaking with a malicious mind, and saying, that, though he had inevitable arrows in his hand, yet he was much ° inferior to his children, in judgment, in the art of casting darts; and said, that, as a servant, he was afflicted by a free man. And, when he was drunk with wine, he cast him out of the company, at which, enraged, when Iphitus came to celebrated Tirynthia, seeking horses among the herd, when his mind was one way and his eyes another, he cast him down the high battlements of a tower; and for that deed, his father, Olympian Jove, the universal king, being angry, sent him sold away, nor endured him, because he had slain by fraud only one man; for, had he openly revenged himself, Jove had forgiven him for his just revenge in punishing him; for the gods above do not favour oppression. But the sons of Eurytus, who insulted him with reproachful language, are all now inhabitants with those below; the city is in bondage, and those whom you see, who, from prosperity, lead a miserable life, come to you; for so your lord commanded, and I, being faithful to him, perform his command. But, when he hath performed pure sacrifices to his father, Jove, for the taking the city, you will receive him safe, for that, after a long speech, well spoken, affords most pleasure to your longing ears.

° *Inferior to his children.*] The Scholiast says, that Eurytus made an offer of his daughter Iole to Hercules, if he overcame his sons in the art of shooting arrows. There are different opinions concerning the number of Eurytus's children; Hesiod speaks of five, viz. Δηΐων, Κλύτιος, Τοξεὺς, and Ἶφιτος. And, in the following verse, he mentions Iole:

Τύς δε μέθ' ὁπλοτάτην τέκετο ξανθην Ἰόλειαν.

It is a mistake, therefore, of the Scholiast to say he mentions but four. Aristocrates mentions only three, viz. Toxeus, Clytius, and Deïon.

Cho. Now, queen, have you received true delight both from this present state of affairs, and from the news this herald doth report.

Dei. Why should I not rejoice, hearing his fortunate success, and justly gained? It is very fit I should rejoice with him, yet those who rightly judge of fortune's inconstancy, should fear least he who prospers at last should miscarry. For sad pity invades me, O my friends, seeing these miserable ladies in a strange country, absent from home, captives, and bereaved of parents; who, probably, before descended of free parents, but now lead a servile life. O Jove, our defender, let me never see thee turning thus thy rage against my offspring, or if you will do ought against them, let it not be while I am alive; for so I fear you will, beholding these unhappy wretches. What youth art thou? [*To Iole.*] Art thou a virgin or a mother; for, as to your age, you seem to be unskilled in all marriage affairs, and nobly born. O Lichas, whose daughter is this stranger? who is her mother? and who her father? who begat her? speak, for I pity her more than the rest, for she seems to me in wisdom to excel them all.

Lich. What do I know? Why dost thou ask me? Perhaps she is born of some who are none of the meanest of the city.

Dei. Is she of royal race, the daughter of Eurytus?

Lich. I know not, nor did I much inquire.

Dei. Nor have you learnt her name from any who came with her?

Lich. Not at all, for silently I did my work.

Dei. Thou wretched lady, speak thyself to us; for this is some misfortune that we know not who thou art.

Lich. If now she is silent, she will do no otherwise than before; for she hath spoken nothing yet, neither much nor little; but ever lamenting her sad

calamities, the wretched lady wept since the time she left her father's country. This is her fortune, sad to her, so that her silence merits pardon.

Dei. Let her alone, and let her go in quietly, so that her present evils may receive no more increase from these sad griefs with which my mind is oppressed; for the present are enough. But let us all go home, and you hasten where you will, I will prepare every thing within that is convenient for the reception of my lord. [*Exit Lichas, and train.*

ACT II. SCENE III.

Messenger, Deianira, Chorus.

Mess. But first stay here a little while, that you may learn whom you bring in, and what besides you never heard, and so know all that is needful; for I have perfect knowledge of every thing.

Dei. What is it? Why do you stop my going?

Mess. Stand still and hear; it was not in vain you listened to what I said before, nor do I think it is now.

Dei. Shall we, therefore, call them again, or will you speak to these present and me?

Mess. To you and these nothing hinders. But let them go.

Dei. They are gone; now let the tale be told.

Mess. This man was true in nothing that he spoke, but either now he is a wicked man, or before he was no true messenger.

Dei. What sayest thou? Tell me plainly all thou knowest. For what thou hast said I know not.

Mess. I heard Lichas say, many witnesses being present, that for the sake of this maid he took Eu-

rytus, and ° Oechalia, adorned with lofty towers, and that love only induced him to do it; not the bondage he underwent among the Lydians, or with Omphale, or the fate of Iphitus cast down, which he pretending, speaks contrary to what he did before. For, when he could not persuade her father to give him the maiden, to enjoy her secret embraces, devising a small accusation against him, and trifling reason, he made war against the country of this maid, wherein he said that Eurytus ruled the kingdom, slew the king, her father, and destroyed the city. And now, as you see, he comes home, sending them before, not carelessly; nor doth he send her as a servant, think not so; nor is it likely he should, since he is fired with the love of her. I have thought fit, O queen, to shew thee every thing which I have learnt of him; and this many in the middle of the forum of the Trachinians heard as well as I, so that he may be disproved. But if I speak not pleasing news, I am not rejoiced at that, yet have I spoke the truth.

Dei. Woe is me, a wretch! What do I, what private mischief do I receive under my roof. Woe is me! But was her name unknown, as that commander swore? Certainly she is very beautiful, both in person and disposition.

Mess. She is descended of her father, Eurytus, and was called Iole, nor mentioned he her pedigree; for truly he inquired nought of it, false man!

Cho. Let not all vile wretches perish, but him,

° *Oechalia, adorned with lofty towers.*] Pherecydes saith, that Hercules came into Oechalia, a city of Arcadia, and desired Iole of Eurytus, for his son, Hyllus, to wife; which request being refused, Hercules destroyed the city, and slew all his sons but Iphitus, who fled into Eubœa. But Menecrates saith himself was in love with her, that Eurytus refused to yield her to him, but that he would have enjoyed her embraces, had he not been prevented by the Argians coming into Eubœa.

whosoever he be that exerciseth himself in secret frauds.

Dei. What must be done, O ye virgins? How I am amazed with these discourses!

Cho. Go and inquire of himself, who will soon declare the truth, if you will extort it from him by violence.

Dei. I will, for your dissent, not from my opinion.

Cho. And shall we stay here, or what must we do?

Dei. Stay, for the man, though not called by any messenger, but of his own accord comes out.

ACT II. SCENE IV.

Lichas, Deianira, Chorus.

Lich. My queen, what must I say to Hercules? tell me, for you see me going.

Dei. Quickly depart from Trachin, unless thou wilt have me repeat again my words.

Lich. If you would inquire any thing of me, I am here.

Dei. Wilt thou speak the truth without disguise?

Lich. Witness, great Jove, I will, as far as I know.

Dei. Then who is this lady whom thou hast brought?

Lich. One of Eubœa, but I know not of whom she descended.

Dei. Look here, to whom do you think you are talking?

Lich. To what purpose do you thus examine me?

Dei. Now be of courage, speak what I ask you?

Lich. Aye, since it is to queen Deianira, daughter of Oeneus, wife of Hercules, (unless my eyes deceive me,) and my mistress.

Dei. That was what I would know of thee. Dost thou own I am thy mistress?

Lich. And lawfully.

Dei. What, therefore; what punishment do you think you deserve, if you are found unjust to me?

Lich. How unjust? What is this you mean by your various questions?

Dei. Nothing; but you mean very much.

Lich. I go hence, I was a fool to hear thee thus long.

Dei. You shall not before you tell me in short what you are asked.

Lich. Speak what you would have, for you are not sparing of speech.

Dei. Do you know that captive whom you have brought into the palace?

Lich. I say I know. Why do you ask?

Dei. Did not you say, that she, whom you pretended to be ignorant of, is Iole, the daughter of Eurytus?

Lich. Unto whom? Who will come and witness to you that he was by and heard me?

Dei. To many of the Trachinians; and great crowds of people heard you.

Lich. Aye; did they say they heard me? But it is not the same to speak one's opinion, and to tell what is certainly true.

Dei. What opinion? Did you not swear you brought her as the concubine of Hercules?

Lich. I said so; by the gods, tell me, dear madam, who this stranger is.

Dei. He who was by, and heard you say that for the love of Iole the whole city was laid waste; and that the Lydian woman did not destroy it, but apparently the love of her.

Lich. Let this man begone; [p] for to trifle with a sick patient is not the part of a wise physician.

[p] *For to trifle with a sick patient.*] Lichas seems to speak this as a proverbial speech; therefore, the Greek is νοσοῦντι, a jealous or sick man, not willing to charge her flatly with jealousy, though he obscurely hints it.

Dei. Do not, by Jove, who thunders on the high forest of Oeta, conceal this matter. For you will not speak to an ill woman, nor one who knoweth not the dispositions of men, that they are not always delighted with their own; for whosoever strives against Love as a champion with his hands, thinks not wisely; for he rules the gods as he pleaseth, and me, and why not another of my disposition. So that if I blame my husband for being possessed with this disease, I should be mad beyond all cure; or this lady, who is not to be blamed for any fault, nor for any harm she ever did to me. It shall not be so; and you, if from him you have learnt to lie, you have had an ill master; but, if you thus instruct yourself, while you would seem good you will shew yourself the contrary: therefore, tell me all the truth, for it is a base character for a free man to be reckoned a liar. If you think you may act concealed, it cannot be, for many to whom you have spoke it will discover to me the truth. If you fear, that is without reason, for not to know might grieve me; but in knowing what should grieve me? [q] Did not my husband, Hercules, marry many more wives? and none of them ever received of me a reproachful word. Nor shall this, though she pine never so much with love of him; for, while I behold, I pity her whose beauty hath wrought her ruin, and she unwillingly hath wrought the destruction and captivity of her country. But I talk to the winds; you I command impose your frauds on others, but always speak the truth to me.

Cho. Listen to her, for she speaks right, and it shall gain my favour; and time, which brings all things to light, will prove you blameless.

Lich. Therefore, O loved mistress, since I per-

[q] *Did not my husband, Hercules, marry many more wives?*] viz. Meda, Auge, Megara, and others.

ceive you mortal, and understand all mortal things, and not unwise, I will tell you all the truth, nor will I conceal ought. As he hath said, the violent love of Iole captivated Hercules, and for her sake wretched Oechalia was destroyed by the sword. And this (for I should speak for him) did he neither bid me conceal, nor did he ever deny it. But I myself, my queen, fearing lest I should disturb your mind, have done a fault, if you account it so. And now, since you know all, respect this woman, both for your own and husband's sake, and make good your words which you spoke concerning her: for he who with a victorious hand overcomes all other things, is quite overcome with love of her.

Dei. So far I know my duty, and not to bring upon myself a voluntary distemper by making war against the gods; but we will go into the palace, that you may there receive, and bear to him my commands; and those gifts which we, in return for his, shall prepare, you shall likewise take; for it is not just you should go away empty, who came hither with a great train.

ACT II. SCENE V.

Strophe.

Chorus.

Cho. Venus hath ever great power of victory, for to pass by the deeds of the gods; and how she made her sport of the son of Saturn, I shall not mention, or Pluto, mighty king, or Neptune, the earth-moving god: but to have her their bride, some armed went to the field before her marriage, to bloody battles, and unseen for clouds of dust.

ANTISTROPHE.

One was a river's might in the shape of a high horned four-footed bull, Acheloüs, [r] who proceeded from Oeniadæ: another came from Thebes, sacred to Bacchus, bearing a crooked bow and arrows, and a spear, brandishing his sceptre; the son of Jove, who joining, went to battle for to marry her. But Venus, the goddess of marriage, alone being present, ruled the fray.

EPODOS.

Then was there noise of hands and bows, and of bulls horns mixed together, [s] a confused battle and deadly blows of meeting foreheads, and loud roaring on every side. But the fair tender maid sat looking on at the refulgent shore, expecting who should be her lord; but, (I as a tender mother speak,) the miserable bride for whom they contended sat waiting, and presently was parted from her mother, as a calf forsaken of her dam.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Deianira, Chorus.

Dei. While he, my friends, stood talking to those captive girls, as upon his departure; then I came out privately, partly to tell you what I have invented, and that I may condole with you the misery which I bear for the maid, but I suppose not so now,

[r] *Who proceeded from Oeniadæ.*] Oeniadæ was a city of Acarnania, through which the river Acheloüs ran.

[s] *A confused battle.*] *Gr.* ἀμφίπλεκτοι κλίμακες. The word κλίμαξ signifies; 1. either the steps of a ladder or stairs; or, 2. it signifies a kind of weapon, which the ancients made use of in fighting; or, 3. the fight itself. As the Scholiast witnesseth, Κλίμακες δὲ αἱ ἐπαναβάσεις παρὰ τὸ ἄνω καὶ κάτω ἀυτὰς γρέφεσθαι ἐν τῇ μάχῃ· ἔστι δὲ εἶδος παλαίσματος ἡ κλίμαξ.

but a wife;) I have received, as a sailor receives a cargo, unpleasing store to me; and we must both receive him to our arms: these gifts the faithful Hercules once called, for the long keeping his house, hath sent me. I know not how to be angry with him, infected with this disease. But to live with Iole, what woman could endure it, and partake of the same bed with her? for I see the vigour of her age increases, mine decays; on such gay objects men love to feed their eyes, and not on us: but this I fear, lest Hercules should [t] forsake me, and fix his affections on her. But, as I said, it is not the part of a prudent woman to be angry, but what kind of remedy I have for this disease I shall tell you. I have a former gift of an ancient Centaur hid in a brazen chest, which while I was young I received of Nessus, just expiring by his wounds; who carried men over the deep river Evenus for hire, using his hands instead of oars and sails; and who carried me, (when I followed Hercules, my husband, and my father's family was there,) bearing me on his shoulders. When he was in the middle of the river, he touched me with his impious hands, and I cried out: anon, the son of Jove, turning about, with his hands sent forth a swift arrow, which rattled through his throat and breast. The dying Centaur said thus much: daughter of old Oeneus, since I have borne you the last over this river, you shall profit by this passage, as you pursue my counsel. If you take the blood flowing from my wound, where the arrows poisoned with the blood of the monster hydra, of

[t] *Forsake me, and fix his affections on her.*] I hope I have given here the true sense of the author, though I have not literally translated his words, which is impossible: for, though the two words πόσις and ἀνὴρ, differ in the Greek and Latin, there are not two different English words for them. The real difference is this, πόσις comes from ἀπο-άς, and means one who is much absent from his wife. But, on the contrary, ἀνὴρ is one who is seldom absent.

Lerna, were fixed, it will be a reconciliation of the love of Hercules to you; so that he will never love any other woman whom he shall see, above you. When I understood this, O my friends, (for it was well preserved at home after his death,) therewith I dipped this coat, and did all which he commanded when alive, and this is done; would I had never either learned or known such vile enterprizes, which, while I undertake, I hate. But, if we can by love potions overcome this maid, and by these blandishments win Hercules, this business is well contrived; if you think I do not work in vain, otherwise, I will cease.

Cho. If thou puttest any faith in that deed, thou seemest not to have acted inconsiderately.

Dei. This is all the faith, it seems so to me, but I have not yet made trial.

Cho. But you ought to know in fact, nor are you so sure of the effect, unless you make the trial.

Dei. But we shall soon know, for I see him coming out, who will be here, only do you conceal this thing; for, if you act an ill deed in darkness you will not fall into reproach.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Lichas, Deianira, Chorus.

Lich. Command what I must do, for we have long waited here.

Dei. That was my care, Lichas, while you talked with those strange women within; it is that you should bear for me this fine woven garment, a gift to my husband, made by my hands; and give it, desiring him, that nō man else besides himself should pūt it on, nor to let the light of the sun behold it, nor the sacred altar, nor domestic fire, ere he ap-

pearing in public, shews it before the gods in the day of sacrificing; for so I vowed, if I should see or hear him safe returned, that with that coat arrayed I would present him to the gods, a new suppliant in a new garment. And bear to him this token, which he will easily know, when he casts his eyes upon the seal. But be gone, and first observe this rule, since you are a messenger, not to desire to go beyond your orders; that then his favour, added to mine, may doubly descend upon you.

Lich. If Mercury's office rightly I discharge, I will not fail in your business; but I will bear this vessel, sealed as it is, to him, and faithfully add those words thou hast said.

Dei. Go, therefore; knowest thou how things are at home?

Lich. I know, and will tell him they are well.

Dei. Thou knowest, and hast seen how kindly I have received this strange damsel.

Lich. So that my heart is amazed with joy.

Dei. But what else wilt thou say? for I fear lest thou shouldst mention my love for him, before I know that I am beloved by him.

Antistrophica Strophe.

Cho. O you who inhabit near the rocky warm baths by the sea, the rocks of Oeta, and about the [u] middle of the bay of Melis and shore of Diana, armed with a golden bow, where there is a Grecian council held, [x] which takes its name from Thermopylæ.

[u] *Middle of the bay of Melis.*] The bay of Melis was near Trachinium, otherwise called the Magnesian bay, where, near Artemisium, was a sea fight between the Grecians and the Persians. Near it was also a temple sacred to Diana: whence χρυσαλακάτῳ ἀχλὰν κόρας.

[x] *Which takes its name from Thermopylæ.*] This council was first instituted by Amphictyon, the son of Helenus, from whom

ANTISTROPHE I.

Let the pipe's shrill note upon this joyful day be heard, whose sound is most agreeable to the divine muses; for the son of Jove and Alcmena comes, bringing noble spoils, the rewards of all his virtue, home.

STROPHE II.

He, whom absent from home whole twelve months we waited for, being on the rough sea, knowing nothing of him. But his dear miserable wife, the wretched lady, with ever-streaming tears afflicted her sad heart. But now raging Mars hath finished the term of his labours.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Let him come, nor let his ship stand still ere he arrives at this city, leaving this island habitation, where he is said to sacrifice; whence let him come hastening all the day, clad with this well-besmeared coat of reconciliation of his love to Deianira, as the Centaur directed her.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Deianira, Chorus.

Dei. [y] O dear ladies, how I fear lest what I have done now be more than what I ought.

the presidents of it were called Amphictyones, and the council, Amphictyonium Concilium: but Sophocles calls it here ἀγοραὶ πυλάτιδες, from πύλαι, ports, or Θερμόπυλαι, warm ports; because the waters of those straits were warm near which this council was held. Agathon says, that it was called πυλαία, from Pylades, the son of Strophus, who there was judged pure after his assisting in the murder of Clytemnestra; or, because that place is the gate or entrance into Greece.

[y] *O dear ladies.*] Here Deianira too late begins to repent of that imprudent act which was the occasion of her own and husband's ruin.

Cho. O queen, what is it?

Dei. I know not, but I fear lest presently it should appear I have done some harm, in hope of doing good.

Cho. Dost thou speak of those gifts thou gavest Hercules?

Dei. Yes: insomuch that I would I had never gone about to persuade any to meddle with a thing they knew nothing of.

Cho. Tell me if it may be told: whence proceeds your fear?

Dei. Thus it is as I shall tell you, ladies, a wonderful and unlooked-for accident hath happened, for the wool with which I anointed the garment, taken from the white fleece of a sheep, hath vanished away, although consumed by nothing but itself, and dissolved into a liquid, it flows on the top of the stones. But that you may know how every thing was done, I shall farther enlarge my discourse. I omitted to do none of those things which the Centaur commanded me, when he languished with pain, his side pierced [z] with an envenomed dart, but observed all as a written law preserved on a brazen table; and, as it was commanded me that I should keep the medicine, and in a corner untouched by the warm rays of the sun, until a proper time should come when I must use this ointment, so have I done: and, when I thought it a proper time to put in practice this device, I anointed a coat at home privately in my chamber, and for that use pulled a fleece from a sheep of the flock; and I have laid it aside folded up, untouched by the rays of the sun, in a hollow chest, and sent it a gift for Hercules, as you see. But, going in I saw an unutterable acci-

[z] *With an envenomed dart.*] The Greek word is γλωχῖν, or γλωχὶς, which signifies a point of a dart, but by the figure the whole is comprehended in the part.

dent, which no man could ever think; for I happened to throw away some part of the wool which I had stained, in a place where the sun's rays were fiercest; but, as soon as it grew warm it flowed about, but how none could discern, and dries upon the ground; which to behold was like saw-dust when wood is sawed, as it lay on the ground. From the ground where it lay, there boiled up frothy bubbles, as from rich wine in autumn poured on the ground, from Bacchus's vine; so that I know not what to think, a wretch, for I see I have done a horrid act. For why should the dying Centaur do me an act of kindness, for whom he died? it cannot be. But desiring to kill him who shot him, he flattered me, and this too late I have learnt when that knowledge is of no use. And I alone, a wretch, unless my thoughts deceive me, shall be his murderess. For I remember how with his dart he wounded Chiron, and whatsoever animals it hits it kills: and why should not the black poison, mingled with the blood which issued from Nessus's wound, kill Hercules himself? It seems to me but justice, and I am resolved, if any unexpected misfortune befals him, with the same violence I will die likewise: for, to live in infamy is intolerable to me, whose care was ever to be good.

Cho. It is necessary to tremble at cruel deeds, but not to judge beforehand what hope we may have from the event.

Dei. In wicked counsels there is no hope to give any encouragement.

Cho. But against those who unwillingly have offended, anger is mild; so should it be toward you.

Dei. One who is partner in evil, cannot say so, but he to whom no domestic evil ever happened.

Cho. It is proper for you, madam, to continue silent for a while, unless you would declare to your son all the story, for he is here, who went to seek his father.

ACT IV. SCENE II.

Hyllus, Deianira, Chorus.

Hyl. O mother, how could I wish one of these three things were true, that you were no more, or could be safely called the mother of some other son, or were endowed with a more honest mind.

Dei. What have I done, my son, thus to deserve thy hate?

Hyl. Know, that thou this day hast slain thy husband and my father.

Dei. Ah, me! my son, what news is this thou bringest?

Hyl. Of a deed that is impossible to be undone; for what is done, who can undo?

Dei. What sayest thou, my son? from whom didst thou hear that I should commit such a horrid act?

Hyl. I myself with these eyes beheld my father's sad calamity, and heard it from his mouth.

Dei. Where did you meet with him, that you know this?

Hyl. If you must know, then I must tell you all: when he departed, after destroying the famous city of Eurytus, bringing with him the spoils and trophies of victory, near the shore of Eubœa there is a promontory, called Cenœum, where he built up altars to his father Jove, and consecrated a green wood; where I with pleasure first beheld him. When he was about to offer his usual sacrifice, a herald came from home, Lichas, his domestic, bearing thy gift, that fatal garment, which he putting on as you before had commanded, slew whole twelve bulls, the first fruits of the spoils; then after that brought all his hundred together, a mingled flock. At first, the wretched man with a merry mind rejoiced in his finery and his garment, and prayed for you; but,

when the flame of the sacred victims and gross trees was kindled, then sweat dropped from his body, and the coat stuck to his sides and all his parts, as though it were glued on by an artificer. Then succeeded a convulsive tearing of his bones, then the poison of the bloody cruel viper hydra fed upon him; then did he call unhappy Lichas, who was not guilty of your crime, and asked him by whose vile frauds he had brought this infected garment. The wretch, ignorant of all, said it was your gift alone, and sent by you. As soon as Hercules heard that, tortured with pain, for he was seized with tearing of his vital members, taking hold of his foot at the place where it bends, he threw him against a rock standing out of the sea: then was his white brains, together with his blood, scattered through his hair; his head being split. Then with a lamentable voice the people cried out, because Hercules was tortured with a disease, and Lichas slain; but none dare to oppose him. Now, did he roll along the plain; now rising, roars and bawls out, so that the rocks on every side, and [a] Locris mountain-tops and the promontories of Eubœa echoed his voice back; but, when his strength was gone, then the miserable man throwing himself against the ground, uttered many dreadful speeches, cursing your unhappy bed, and his nuptials with the daughter of Oeneus; whom he chose the destruction of his life. Then raising his distorted eyes from his inclosing smoke, he saw me weeping amidst the great army, and seeing me, he calls me, O my son, said he, avoid me not in my calamity, not although you should die with me; but bear me hence, and place me there, where no man shall behold me. If thou hast any compassion,

[a] *Locris mountain-tops.*] Locris is a country adjoining to Phocis, of which Ajax Oïleus, was king, according to Homer:

Λοκρῶν δ' ἠγεμόνευεν Ὀϊλῆος ταχὺς Αἴας.

speedily bear me out of this country, lest I die here. When he had thus spoken, we placed him in a ship, and with much labour brought him roaring with convulsive pains, and presently you will see him, either alive or newly dead. Mother, all this you have contrived against my father, for which I pray, if it be just, may great justice and his avenging fury punish thee; but it is just, for thou hast made it so, who hast slain the best of men that ever your eyes beheld.

Cho. Why dost thou silently go hence? Know you not that this silence speaks you guilty of the charge? [*Exit Deianira.*

Hyl. Let her go, and may the wind be fair for her departure, that I may never see her more. Why should she boast a mother's name, who hath done nothing worthy of a mother? but let her go and prosper, and the same delight as she gave my father, may she enjoy. [*Exit Hyllus.*

ACT IV. SCENE III.

Antistrophica Strophe 1.

Chorus.

Cho. [b] You see, maidens, how soon the divine oracle, which was delivered in Dodona's grove, is come to pass on us, by which it was decreed, that when the twelfth year was perfected, the son of Jove should find rest from toils. All this is inevitably now come to pass; for, how should he, who beholds no more the light, being dead, endure more this toilsome bondage?

Antistrophe.

For, if love necessitated Deianira deceitfully to

[b] *You see, maidens, how soon.*] Here the Chorus reason among themselves, concerning the oracle delivered about Hercules, at Dodona.

anoint a coat for Hercules with the poisonous gore of the Centaur, into whose side the arrow stuck, poisoned by death, and the spotted dragon, Hydra: how should he even see another sun, who is consumed with the poison of the terrible monster Hydra, and the deceitful burning stings of Nessus tormenting him likewise? Wherefore, Deianira seeing a great and speedy evil threatening her house from this new marriage, partly being ignorant, and partly persuaded by the voice of another, with pernicious arts to gain her husband's love. Surely she alone laments, surely she pours forth floods of tears, for the approaching fate of Hercules declares that another private evil will shortly be committed by her.

Antistrophe II.

Cho. A fountain of tears breaks forth; I have caught the infection. Alas! this is such an affliction as never happened to glorious Hercules, even from his enemies, and worthy our pity. O fatal dart with which he fought, and too soon brought a bride from lofty Oechalia, by the right of war. Yet Venus, although silent, was an assister, and evidently the cause of all.

Cho. I am deceived, or I hear a general cry spread through the palace. What shall I say! somebody cries with no low voice within, but with a mournful howl. What sudden change hath happened in the palace? but observe this ancient woman, who comes to tell some news, knitting her brows beyond her wonted custom.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Nurse, Chorus.

Nur. O, daughter, how was that gift sent to Hercules, the beginning of mighty evils?

Cho. What new tale is this, old woman, which thou tellest us?

Nur. [c] Deianira is gone the last of all her journeys, with feet unmoved.

Cho. What is she dead?

Nur. Thou hast heard all.

Cho. Is the miserable lady dead?

Nur. Thou hearest it again.

Cho. Miserable, undone, wretch! But in what manner did she die?

Nur. In a most lamentable manner.

Cho. Tell me by what death she expired?

Nur. She slew herself.

Cho. What rage, or what disease drove her to that desperate act?

Nur. The point of a fatal sword slew her.

Cho. How could she contrive thus to add one death to another?

Nur. By the wound of a lamentable sword.

Cho. And didst thou, simple woman, see this mischief done?

Nur. I did, for I stood by.

Cho. Who was it? How? Tell me.

Nur. She acted it on herself with her own hand.

Cho. What sayest thou?

Nur. What is true.

Cho. Alas! this bride, who is lately come, hath brought forth a great fury for this house.

[c] *Deianira is gone the last of all her journeys.*] Because death is a journey which every one must take once, and no more. Hor. lib. car. i. Od. 28.

Et calcanda semel via lethi.

In the last act is introduced a woman who attended upon Deianira, giving the Chorus an account of her death, and being unwilling at first to strike them with too much grief, says she is gone. Which word as it bears a two-fold sense, may be understood either of any one's moving to a place, or the soul's departing out of the body, the Chorus asks again, ἦ ποῦ ὡς θανεῖσα ? Is she dead?

Nur. Ah, too much, but chiefly if thou hadst been by, and hadst seen what she did, sadly thou wouldst have mourned.

Cho. And could any female hand bear to do this?

Nur. Most cruel indeed it was; and when you hear you shall attest the truth of what I say. When she alone went into the palace, and saw her son in the hall, [d] making the funeral-bed, again to meet his father, she hid herself where none should see her; and, falling down before the altars, cried out, that she was now forsaken; and wept as often as she touched any of those instruments which the miserable woman used before. And, turning herself every way about the house, if she saw any favourite of her family; beholding him, the wretched woman wept, exclaiming against her sad fortune, crying that hereafter she must be ever destitute of comfort and child-bearing. But, after she ceased from weeping, presently I saw her falling upon Hercules's bed. I, hiding myself, watched her with an undiscerned eye; then did I see her on the marriage-bed of Hercules, strewing the clothes; and having done this, she leaped upon it, sat in the middle of the bed; and, pouring forth warm floods of tears, she said, O bed, and my nuptials, farewell for ever! for never hereafter shall you receive me lying on these clothes. Having thus spoke, with a quick hand she loosed her garments, where a gold button covered her breast, uncovered her whole side, and her left arm. Then I ran as fast as I could, and told her son what she was meditating; and whilst we are running here and there, we see her wounded through the heart, with a two-edged sword. Her son then wept, beholding this, for he understood, unhappy youth, that through rage she had done this; having too late learnt of those about

[d] *Making the funeral-bed.*] *Gr.* Δέμνια.

the house, that, deceived by the Centaur, unwillingly she had committed this crime. Then the miserable youth, dissolved in tears, prostrate embraced her; and, his side joined with her's, lay lamenting much that, without cause, he had accused her of a crime; lamenting, likewise, that at once he is deprived of both father and mother. This is our present case; so that if any reckon upon two or more future days he is a fool: nor should we regard what accident to-morrow will produce, but consider how we may provide for our safety the present day.

ACT V. SCENE II.

Chorus.

Cho. Which misfortune shall I now lament? Which of these fatal deeds? Alas! it is hard for me, a wretch, to judge; one is before our eyes, the other we expect. To have, and certainly to expect, is equal.

STROPHE.

I wish some favourable wind would blow from home, to bear me from this palace, lest I die with fear, seeing the brave son of Jove alone: for they say that this great miracle draws near the palace, overwhelmed with griefs incurable.

ANTISTROPHE.

He is near, and not far off; as the shrill nightingale they weep. Here is a company of strangers coming, and every one helps to bear him as a friend, and, without noise, walking with silent tread. What can I judge? That he is asleep or dead?

ACT V. SCENE III.

Enter Hercules, borne in a chair, followed by a company weeping for him, which Hyllus meets.

Hyl. Woe is me, a wretch! Father, father, woe is me! What shall I do? What course shall I take? Woe is me!

Old Man. Be silent, child, nor move the fierce pains of thy raging father, for he lies asleep, looking downward: but forbear to bite thy lips.

Hyl. What sayest thou, old man, is he alive?

Old Man. Raise him not from his sleep, nor stir him, lest thou likewise raise his furious raging distemper.

Hyl. O, but my sad heart doth cause me endless woe!

Her. O, Jove, whither shall I go? Among whom do I lie, afflicted with never-ceasing pains? Woe is me, a wretch! Now again the infection rages, alas! [*Hercules awakes.*

Old Man. Did you not know that it was better to be silent, and not to chase soft slumbers from his head and eyebrows? [*To Hyllus.*

Hyl. How could I rest, seeing this sad evil?

Her. O Cenæan hill, where sacred altars are placed, what thanks hast thou returned me now? And for how great sacrifices! O, Jove! what disgrace hast thou brought on me? I would I had never seen with my eyes such an implacable rage of madness. What enchanter or experienced physician can appease it, except Jove alone? O that I could see that miracle, though never so far, approaching. Let me lie still, an unhappy man as I am, let me lie still. Where dost thou touch me? Thou killest me! Where wouldst thou thrust me? Thou hast raised that, which otherwise had slept. My disease

is disturbed, and again rages. Where are you, the most unjust of all the Grecians, whose woods and seas I, who so often have scoured, thus miserably perish, and none of you will turn against me fire, or friendly sword, and cut off my head, to rid me of this hated life.

Old Man. O thou, who art son of this man, that is too great a task for my strength, but do thou assist; thou hast a nimbler eye to assist him than me.

Hyl. I touch him, but neither at home nor abroad can I find a remedy for this life-consuming disease.

Her. O son, son, where art thou? Hold me here, hold me here, and raise me up. O my sad fortune, it comes on me again, it comes on me, the terrible fierce disease which destroys me. O Pallas, it again torments me, pity your father, draw your sword, which none will blame, and stab me to the heart, and heal this pain which your impious mother hath inflicted on me; whom O that I could see lying in the same torment which she hath given me. Brother of Jove, dear Pluto, lay me asleep; and with a speedy death destroy an unhappy man.

Cho. O my friends, I tremble to hear of the sad calamities in which so great a man as the king is overwhelmed.

Her. Many great and unutterable toils my body hath endured, and many exploits I have with my hands performed, yet neither Juno nor Eurystheus ever imposed on me what the deceitful daughter of Oeneus hath. For she hath bound my shoulders with a net, spun by the furies, by which I die, for it, sticking to my sides, feeds on my flesh, sucks up my spirits, and drinks my corrupted blood; and my whole body is consumed and bound in with this abominable garment. This, neither the hostile sword, nor the earth-born host of giants, nor the Centaur's power, nor Grecian, nor barbarian, nor all the coun-

tries I cleared of monsters, ever before effected. But [e] a weak woman, of no man-like disposition, slew me without a sword. O, my son, be ready to shew thyself truly my son, nor honour more thy mother's name. Bring her out with your own hand, and deliver her to me, that I may know whether you more lament my suffering body than you will her injurious form, when you shall see it justly punished by me. Go my son, behold, pity me who am pitied by many thus weeping as a virgin; and that no man that ever lives can say he saw me do before, for without murmuring I ever bore my evils: but now from such a one I am all turned woman, and now come near and stand by thy father, and behold what calamities I endure, and all caused by this garment. Look all of you and behold my miserable body; behold a miserable man how I suffer. Now the convulsions rage, they pierce me asunder; nor doth the consuming disease leave me free in any part. O infernal king receive me; O thunderbolt of Jove, strike me, O strike me down with thunder. Now the convulsions again devour me; now they revive and rage furiously. O my hands, back, breast, and arms, it is you who once slew the immense, inaccessible lion of Nemæa, the destroyer of the cattle, and the monster-hydra of Lerna: it is you who slew the pernicious mighty army of Centaurs, who partook the natures both of men and horses, and the boar

[e] *A weak woman, of no, &c.*] *Gr.* γυνὴ δὲ, θῆλυς ἔσα. Mr. Johnson, in his notes upon this passage says, that the word γυνὴ in general signifies a woman of what disposition soever; but θῆλυς, in a stricter sense, means a timorous woman, weak in body and mind. This he confirms by v. 1083.

Νῦν δ' ἐκ τοιούτου θῆλυς ἔυρημαι.

From such a brave man I am quite turned woman, or am emasculated.

of Erymanthus, and brought from hell [f]the three-headed dog, that resistless monster begotten of the viper. It is you who slew the dragon, keeper of the golden apple in the borders of Libya, and many other toils I have endured; nor was ever any power victorious over me, but now am I torn and disjointed, and by a secret pestilence am consumed: I, who am son of the best of mothers, and of celestial Jove. But be well-assured of this, that though I perish and become very nothing, she who is the author of these vile deeds shall feel the severity of my hand. Let her come only, and she shall be taught by experience to declare to all, that alive or dead I will punish the wicked.

Cho. O wretched Greece, in what grief shall I see you overwhelmed, if you are deprived of this man?

Hyl. Father, since you permit me to speak, keep silence and hear me, though you are in pain, for I will ask that which it is but just I should obtain. Listen to me, nor let your anger thus prevail, for you know not what just reason you have to rejoice, nor why you grieve thus vainly.

Her. Say what thou wilt, then cease; for I being grieved with this disease, understand not perplexed discourses.

Hyl. I am going to speak concerning my mother, and to shew how her case is, and wherein she unwillingly offended.

Her. Villain, dost thou again mention thy murderous mother that I should hear thee?

Hyl. For so the case is, that it were unfit for me to be silent.

Her. No; because of her crime against me committed.

[f] *The three-headed dog.*] *i. e.* Cerberus. See our notes upon Oedipus Coloneus, Act V. note [y].

Hyl. But presently you will not say she hath offended.

Her. Speak, but beware lest you shew yourself an unnatural son.

Hyl. Then I will speak. My mother is just now dead.

Her. By whom? thou speakest of monstrous evils.

Hyl. By her own hand, and none else.

Her. Woe is me, would she had died by mine.

Hyl. You would change your mind, did you know all.

Her. Thou hast now begun to say somewhat more wonderful; but speak as thou knowest.

Hyl. She did every thing amiss, while conscious of no ill.

Her. Conscious of no ill, when she hath slain thy father?

Hyl. Thinking to reconcile your love to herself by a philtre she erred, when she perceived your other marriage.

Her. Who was so great a sorcerer among the Trachinians?

Hyl. Nessus, the Centaur, once persuaded her to secure your love by that philtre.

Her. [g] Alas, I am undone, nor shall hereafter behold the light. Woe is me! I see my sad calamities. Go, my son, thou hast no more a father, call hither all your brothers, call wretched Alcmena, vainly called wife of Jove, to hear the final answer of the oracle concerning me, which I have learned.

Hyl. She is not here, but is gone to Tirynthia, near the shore, to dwell. Some of her sons she hath taken and keeps with her, others inhabit the city of Thebes; but as many of us as are here are ready to hear and to assist thee.

[g] *Alas, I am undone.*] He breaks out into this exclamation, remembering the oracle delivered concerning him at Dodona.

Her. Therefore hear this: now is it time for thee to shew of what father thou art born, since thou art mine. It was formerly told me, by my father, that I should die by none living, but one who is dead, and an inhabiter among the infernal shades: therefore this Centaur, as the divine oracle foretold, though dead, hath slain me. But now will I tell you new prophecies like those old ones which I received of my father's [h]prophesying oak, and wrote down [i]when I went into the forest of the mountainous Selli, who lie on the ground. These answered

[h] *Prophesying oak.*] *Gr.* πολυλλώσσου δρυός. The oaks and beeches of this grove were, according to fiction, endowed with human voice and a prophetical spirit, for which reason they were called προτήγορoι, and μαντικαὶ, and πολύγλωσσοι δρύες, *i.e.* speaking or prophesying oaks. This fiction seems to be grounded upon a practice of the prophets, of placing themselves when they gave answers in one of the trees; for Sophocles seems here to allow this faculty only to one of them, and so the oracle was thought to be uttered by the oak, which was only pronounced out of its hollow stock, or from among its branches.

[i] *When I went into the forest of the mountainous Selli, who lie on the ground.*] *Gr.* χαμαικοιτῶν Σελλῶν. Others write their names Helli without σ. They were those persons who delivered the oracles at Dodona's grove. Homer gives them the epithets of ἀνιπτόποδες and χαμαιεῦναι, whence Strabo concludes they were barbarous and uncivilized. Eustathius tells us they were called χαμαιεῦναι, (and consequently χαμαικοίτοι,) because they slept upon the ground in skins, and in that posture expected prophetical dreams from Jupiter. Others will have them so called, because they did not lie on beds, but on the bare ground; and that they were called ἀνιπτόποδες, because they never went out of the temple, and, therefore had no occasion to wash their feet. Others will have those names to be understood only in a figurative sense, thus: their bodies, indeed, did lie on the ground, but their minds, by the assistance of prophetical philosophy, soared above these lower regions. There are other reasons given for these titles by the old Scholiast on Homer, Il. ϖ. p. 1074. Edit. Basil. Lastly, others thus, that all the oracles were delivered by women; and, that the Selli were only inhabitants of the neighbouring country, who were employed in the temple, and published the oracles to other men which they received of the prophetesses.

me, that after I lived to this present time, there would be an end of my toils; and then I thought I should live happy: but that was nothing else but I must die, for the dead have no trouble. Now, since these things are plainly come to pass, my son, you ought to be my assistant, nor wait until my anger rises, but do what is your duty, since it is a good law, that you should obey your father.

Hyl. O father, I fear to contend against that law; in every thing therefore I will obey thee.

Her. Then first lend me thy right hand.

Hyl. For what end dost thou so earnestly desire that pledge of faith?

Her. Wilt thou not give it me, nor come near?

Hyl. Here I give it, nor shall it be denied thee.

Her. Swear now by Jove, my father.

Hyl. What shall I swear to do, and I will do it?

Her. That you will do what I shall say.

Hyl. I swear, therefore, by Jove, the punisher of perjury.

Her. But, if you should be false, implore vengeance against yourself.

Hyl. I shall not suffer vengeance, but will do it, yet I implore.

Her. Knowest thou the top of the high mountain Oeta, sacred to Jove?

Hyl. I know, for there I often sacrificed.

Her. Then must thou now with thine own hands, with some of thy choice friends, bear my body there; then cutting down much wood, both of the deep rooted oak, and likewise the male wild olive-tree, raise a funeral pile, and lay my body on; then taking a bright burning torch of pitch, set it on fire: let no lamentation be heard, nor shed one tear; but, without both, if truly thou art my son, do this; but, if not, I will continue for ever to curse thee among the dead.

Hyl. Woe is me, father, what hast thou said! What hast thou bid me do?

Her. What thou must do, otherwise thou art born of another father, thou shalt not be called my son.

Hyl. Ah, me! again dost thou bid me be a parricide and thy murderer?

Her. Not I, but my only physician and healer of those evils which I suffer.

Hyl. But how by burning your body shall I heal it?

Her. If you abhor that office, do the rest.

Hyl. I will not refuse the bearing of the wood.

Her. Meanest thou to get ready the pile?

Hyl. As far as I am able, so I touch not your body with my hands to burn it; every thing else I will do; you shall not want my assistance.

Her. This will be enough, add this small kindness to other great ones thou hast done me.

Hyl. Though it be great, yet it shall be done.

Her. Knowest thou the virgin daughter of Eurytus.

Hyl. Thou meanest Iole, as I suppose.

Her. Thou art right; this I desire of thee, my son, when I am dead, if thou wilt act piously, remembering the oath by which thou art bound to me, make her thy wife: do not oppose thy father, nor let any other man beside you take her who lay by my side, but take her to thy own bed. Obey me, for since thou hast obeyed me in great matters, if thou disobeyest me in small, thou forfeitest all thy former thanks thereby.

Hyl. Ah, me! it is base to be angry with a sick man, but who can bear to see one thus disposed?

Her. Sayest thou so, that thou wilt do nought which I command thee?

Hyl. Who could endure her, who alone was the cause of my mother's death, and of your disease? Who, I say, could endure this, but one who is perse-

cuted by the furies? it is better for me to die than to cohabit with my worst of foes.

Her. This man, I think, respects not his dying father, but the curse of the gods waits on thee for disobeying thy father's commands.

Hyl. Ah, me! thou seemest to talk as thy distemper dictates.

Her. Dost thou again awake my ceasing pains?

Hyl. Ah, me! how many doubts distract my soul.

Her. Dost thou not think it is just to obey thy father?

Hyl. But, father, shall I learn to be impious?

Her. It is no impiety to gratify my mind.

Hyl. But dost thou command things altogether just?

Her. I do, I call the gods as my witnesses.

Hyl. Therefore I will do them, nor will I disobey, and protest before the gods that this is your work; for I can never seem wicked, while I obey thee, my father.

Her. Thou hast well concluded, and add this speedy favour to thy former, before my fury and convulsions tear me; place me upon the pile, go hasten and bear me thither: this is my final rest from sorrows.

Hyl. Nothing hinders but I may do this, since thou commandest and forcest me.

Her. Go now before my disease is again awaked. O hard heart! cease thy clamour as though shut up with steel: for even a most ungrateful thing is acceptable. [*They bear Hercules to the pile.*

Hyl. Support him, my companions, and herein give me pardon, knowing in these present calamities, how I am unpitied of the gods; who, having begot me and been called my fathers, overlook these sufferings. What is to come none can foresee, the

present misfortunes are lamentable, to others sad, but most intolerable to him who bears the loss.

Cho. Thou, maid, go not from home, [*the Chorus to each other,*] who hast seen the funerals of great men, and all the calamities which of late we have borne: and there is none of them which Jove was not the cause of.

THE

TRAGEDY

OF

PHILOCTETES.

Dramatis Personae.

ULYSSES.

NEOPTOLEMUS.

PHILOCTETES.

A Merchant.

Chorus of old Men who accompanied Neoptolemus in his ship.

HERCULES.

SCENE—The Island of Lemnos, near the Cave of Philoctetes; where are many craggy rocks, precipices, and promontories, near the sea.

PHILOCTETES.

THE ARGUMENT—*Philoctetes having discovered the altar of Hercules, in the island Chrysa, was stung in the foot by a serpent which guarded it, when he would approach too near it. This biting caused a desperate ulcer to arise in his foot, for the anguish of which he could rest neither day nor night, but disturbed the Grecian army with his perpetual cries. Wherefore he was, by Ulysses and Diomedes, exposed on the island of Lemnos, where he continued ten years, forlorn and comfortless. When the ten years were near expired, one Helenus was taken from Troy by the fraud of Ulysses, who declared to the Grecians, that (according to the prophecy of Calchas) it was impossible that Troy should be taken without the arrows of Hercules, which were in the possession of Philoctetes, and the assistance of Neoptolemus, son of Achilles. Neoptolemus and Ulysses went, therefore, to Lemnos to bring him from thence back to the camp at Troy. But when neither the frauds of the latter nor the persuasions of the former could prevail upon him to return, Hercules is supposed to descend from heaven, and command him to go with them, who tells him the two advantages he would gain thereby: namely, the reputation of conqueror of Troy, and to be healed of his old sore. Whereupon, after bidding adieu to his old place of habitation, he goes with them.*

We have in the person of Philoctetes a representation of the miseries of man; and the moral deducible is, that we ought to bear with patience our lighter afflictions, when we see a miserable prince, though guilty of no crime, suffer the worst of ills.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Neoptolemus, Ulysses.

Ulys. O, Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, the bravest Grecian that ever fought at Troy, [a] this is the shore of sea-encompassed Lemnos, by men untrodden and uninhabited: where, by the order of the Grecian commanders, I exposed Philoctetes, the Melian, son of Pæan. The reason why they gave me that command was this: his feet were wasted away by a consuming sore, this made him cry and bawl, and with dire imprecations so to fill the camp perpetually, that we could neither pour out libations nor offer sacrifices in quietness for him. But why should I at present talk of that? This juncture admits of no tedious discourses, lest he should learn that I am come, and so I ruin the whole plot by which I think to take him. I have another task demands thy aid: first, look if thou canst find the rock I thus describe. It hath two doors, which in the cold receive the rays both of the rising and the setting sun; and in the summer the gentle gale which blows in at the cave, on both sides open, provokes soft sleep. A little below, on the left hand, you may see a fountain-stream, if it be there still. Go, and silently signify to me whether

[a] *This is the shore.*] The prologue of this tragedy is spoken by Ulysses, as in Euripides, only herein they differ, that, as Sophocles joins Neoptolemus with him, Euripides lays all on Ulysses.

The prologue of the ancient tragedy is that part of it which precedes the entrance of the Chorus, and makes a true part of the tragedy. Not as it is in our modern tragedies, where the prologue is only to explain to the audience what concerns the subject of the poem, which is, therefore, entire without it.

he continues in the same place, or if he hath moved his quarters, that you may hear what I have else to say. Thus we'll assist each other.

Neop. The task, Ulysses, which you impose is not hard; for methinks I see the den you mentioned.

Ulys. Above or below? For I understand you not.

Neop. Above, nor is there track of foot.

Ulys. But see if he be not laid asleep.

Neop. I see a habitation forsaken of its dwellers.

Ulys. Nor is there within any domestic food?

Neop. Bruised leaves, as if some lay there.

Ulys. Are other places empty? Is there nothing else?

Neop. A wooden pot, the work of some bad workman, and a fire-pot likewise.

Ulys. You mention all his treasure.

Neop. Alas! And here are rags dried, full of filth and matter.

Ulys. Certainly the man inhabits here, nor is he far off; for how should a man distempered in his feet, with an old sore, go far? He is gone to the way from the pastures, or hath found out some wholesome herb; send this servant to spy, lest he should come upon me privately, for he would rather take me than all the Grecians.

Neop. He is gone and will watch his way. [*Servant sent out.*] But thou, if thou wouldst say any thing, now say it.

Ulys. In this business thou art come about, thou must not only be stout in body, but in mind; if thou hearest any strange thing which thou never didst hear before, be by to assist me.

Neop. What, therefore, dost thou command?

Ulys. You must deceive Philoctetes with words when he shall ask you who and whence you are. You must say you are the son of Achilles, that must not be concealed: feign that you are sailing

home, leaving the Grecian fleet, hating them with most bitter hatred; who, after they had beseeched you, with many entreaties, to come from home, when they could not by other means take Troy, gave not the armour of Achilles to you, when you came and justly demanded them; but gave them to Ulysses, saying the worst of ill you can imagine against me; you will not thereby grieve me, but if you do it not you will grieve all the Grecians; for, unless his darts are taken, it will be impossible to take Troy. Understand, therefore, how you may easily have free conversation with him, but I cannot. Thou hast sailed hither bound by oath to none, nor through necessity; nor in the beginning of the war wast thou a companion. But nought of this can I deny, so that if he, possessing the darts, shall perceive me, I perish, and shall likewise kill you. This, therefore, must be contrived, to steal those arms you cannot overcome. I know that you are not of such a disposition to invent and say all yourself, yet were it a pleasant thing to obtain the victory. Be bold, at another time we will be just; but now give yourself up to me, and for a short time be impudent, and afterwards the most religious of all men.

Neop. O son of Laertes, those things I hear with grief I hate to act. [b] I can do nothing by base arts, nor could he who begat me; but I am prepared to compel him by force, and not by fraud: for with one foot he will never overcome us by force, being so many. Since I am sent as an assister, I would not be called a traitor; for I had rather miscarry in

[b] *I can do nothing by base.*] Sophocles, in this piece, gives Neoptolemus manners something like those of his father; for he supposeth him a person brave, and hating fraudulent contrivances; one who would not do a base thing, though he should gain by it: for he puts in his mouth the words of Achilles,

Ἐχθρός γάρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμῶς Ἀΐδαο πύλῃσι.

my enterprize while I do well than basely to overcome.

Ulys. Thou son of a noble father, when I was a youth myself, I had a slow tongue, but a courageous hand; but now, by experience, I find, it is the tongue, not the hands, which governs all things.

Neop. What else dost thou command me, besides lying?

Ulys. I say that you must take Philoctetes by craft.

Neop. But why rather by craft, than by persuasion?

Ulys. He will not submit, nor can you take him by force.

Neop. Hath he this prodigious strength?

Ulys. He hath inevitable mortal darts.

Neop. Nor is it safe to come near him?

Ulys. No, unless you take him by fraud, as I say.

Neop. But thinkest thou it is not a vile thing to lie?

Ulys. No; when to lie is the safest way.

Neop. With what face dare any one say this?

Ulys. [c] When you do any thing for your profit, you ought not to be afraid.

Neop. But what profit is it for me, that he should come to Troy?

Ulys. His arrows alone will take Troy.

Neop. Did you not say that I should take it?

Ulys. Not you without them, or they without you.

Neop. They must, therefore, be taken, since it is so.

Ulys. If you do it, you will have two rewards.

Neop. Which are they? If I know them, I shall not refuse to do it.

[c] *When you do any thing for your profit, you ought not.*] But those of Ulysses, on the contrary, are fraudulent and self-ended, and shew he would stick at nothing for his advantage; yea, he plainly declares it. For he says, ὅταν τι δρᾷς ἐς κέρδος ἐκ ὀκνεῖν πρέπει.

Ulys. You will be called both wise and brave.

Neop. Go, I will do it, laying aside all modesty.

Ulys. Dost thou remember, therefore, what counsel I gave thee?

Neop. Be assured of it, since once I have approved of it.

Ulys. Therefore, do thou stay here to wait for him; but I will go hence, lest I should be seen, and will send again the spy to the ship; and, if I think you delay too long, I will send him back again in the disguise of a sailor, changing his habit, as if he met with you by ignorance, whom you shall observe speaking mystically, whatsoever he says for your advantage. I go, therefore, to my ship, leaving these instructions with you; [d] and may Mercury, that subtle commander, conduct us, and victorious Pallas, guardian of the city, which always defends me.

ACT I. SCENE II.

Strophe I.

Chorus, Neoptolemus.

What should I, a stranger, do in a strange land? Shall I be private? Or what shall I speak before the man, when he suspects us? Tell me? For [e] his counsel exceeds all other counsels and opinions, by whom the divine sceptre of Jove is swayed. To thee, O son, the ancient power belongs; then tell me wherein I should assist thee?

[d] *May Mercury, that subtle commander.*] See the notes on Electra.

[e] *His counsel exceeds all other counsels and opinions, by whom the divine sceptre.*] So in the Oedipus Tyrannus.

ὦ πλεῖτε, καὶ τύραννοι, καὶ τέχνη τέχνης.
——————— ὑπερφέρεται.

Neop. Now would you see the utmost bounds of the place where he inhabits, look boldly. And when this terrible traveller comes from his covert, thou still approaching to my hand, endeavour to assist in the present affair.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Cho. Thou tellest me, my lord, what I thought before, to observe the motions of your eyes, and to watch your occasions which demand my help. Now tell me his usual haunts, the places of his abode; it is fit I know them, lest I should not know him when he comes. What place doth he inhabit? Where is his seat, and what way does he pass out or in?

Neop. You see this dome, and the double doors, and rocky bed.

Cho. Where is the wretch himself absent?

Neop. To seek for food he somewhere walks, this way, hard by. The report is, that this is his wretched manner of life, to shoot with swift arrows, and not to seek any remedy for his disease.

STROPHE I.

Cho. I pity him that he hath none to take care of him, nor any relation to regard him; but the wretch, ever alone, endures a cruel disease, and is in sorrow in every time of need. How, alas! how doth the wretch endure himself? O the toils of mortals! O miserable race of men! who in their fortunes enjoy no middle state.

ANTISTROPHE II.

This man, perhaps in birth, second to none, the most unhappy of all men in his life, lies alone apart from all others, with the spotted and hairy beasts, afflicted with pains and hunger, oppressed with most intolerable cares; and, the mournful echo with

open mouth, resounding far off, repeats his sad complaints.

Neop. Nothing of this seems wonderful to me; for, if I understand ought, these afflictions are sent by a divine hand; by [f] means of cruel Chryse: and now that he suffers without friends, it is not without the providence of the gods, that he should no sooner cast his invincible arrows against Troy; then that time comes wherein it was foretold, that it must be overcome by them.

ANTISTROPHICA STROPHE.

Cho. Be silent, child.

Neop. What is that?

Cho. Methinks I hear the voice of an afflicted man.

Neop. Which way? This way or that? the voice of one salutes my ears, which, though it sounds from far, I can discern it is the voice of sorrow.

ANTISTROPHE.

Cho. But take my son.

Neop. What?

Cho. New cares, for the man is not far distant, but hard by, nor delighted with voice of pipe as a country shepherd; but, either he having struck against something, roars out with a loud voice; or, seeing our entrance into this sad port, bawls thus terribly.

[f] *By means of cruel Chryse.*] Chryse was a city near Lemnos, where Philoctetes was bit by the serpent in his foot, while he was looking for the altar on which Hercules sacrificed, when he went to fight against Troy. But there was likewise a nymph of that name, who, being in love with Philoctetes, because he slighted her, she prayed these evils might befal him; and, therefore, the poet calls her cruel.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Philoctetes, Chorus, Neoptolemus.

Phil. O strangers! who are you, who have put in at this land, neither fit for your reception, nor inhabited? Of what nation or kindred shall I call you? for I see a kind of Grecian habit which I most of all admire; I desire to hear your voice: nor, trembling with fear, stand amazed beholding me thus fierce, but pity me, a wretch, who am alone, forsaken, and friendless. Speak, if you are come as friends, and answer me; for, it is not fit that I should fail of that kindness from you, or you from me.

Neop. First then, stranger, know that we are Grecians; it is that thou desirest to know.

Phil. O most loved voice: ah! that I should hear a Grecian's voice, after so long time. Who brought thee hither, son? What necessity? What violence forced you hither? Or what most friendly of all the winds? tell me plainly the whole matter, that I may know who you are.

Neop. I am of the land of Scyros, and am sailing home. I am called Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles. Now thou knowest all.

Phil. O son of a father most beloved by me, darling of Lycomedes; with what fleet didst thou sail into this land? And whence art thou come?

Neop. I have sailed with my fleet from Ilium.

Phil. How? thou didst not sail with us to Ilium in the beginning of the war.

Neop. And did you partake in that service?

Phil. O son! knowest thou not whom thou seest?

Neop. How should I know him whom I never saw before?

Phil. Didst thou never hear my name, or the

fame of my sufferings, with which I have been oppressed?

Neop. I know none of them.

Phil. Oh, me, a wretch! detested of the gods! of whom, though suffering thus, no report ever reached home, nor Greece; they who impiously banished me, deride me silently, but this my distemper still increases. O son! born of Achilles, I am he who probably thou hast heard, am master of the darts of Hercules: Philoctetes, the son of Pæan, whom the two Atridæ basely exposed, to perish by the cruel wound of a viper. And when they had exposed me here, in their voyage hither from Chryse, when gladly they saw me asleep upon a rock, tired with sailing, they then went away and left me; and, as to a poor wretch, they gave me a few rags and a little food, such as they had. But how do you think I awaked from my sleep when they were gone, and how deplored my sufferings, when I saw that my ships were sailed away, that I had no neighbour, and none was present to assist me, labouring under this distemper? considering all things, I found no relief was near, but I must lie in pain, and I had opportunity enough for that. My time passed on, and I must seek for myself some nourishment in this mean habitation, and that my bow found out by shooting of fleet doves; and whatsoever else my arrow shot, I crawled along to seize it: moreover, if I wanted drink, or to break wood in the frosty winter, that I crawled out and did. Then there wanted fire; so, knocking the stones together, with difficulty I produced the fire which lay concealed in them, which preserves me: a habitation, therefore, with fire, furnishes all things besides health. Now learn concerning this island. No sailor willingly puts into it, for there is no harbour here, nor any gain to be had by trading; nor is any entertainment here; therefore, no skilful sailors steer their course

this way. Perhaps some against his will might put in here, for many such things happen in long time. They comfort me with their speeches when they come, and, out of pity, give me some food and clothing; but none will bring me home when I make that request, but miserably I perish for these ten years with hunger and sorrows, feeding a devouring distemper.

And all this I have suffered from the Atridæ and Ulysses, to whom may the celestial gods repay condign punishment.

Cho. I pity you, as well as other strangers who come hither.

Neop. I can attest the truth of thy words, for I know by experience that they are wicked men, and that Ulysses is violent.

Phil. And hast thou an accusation against the vile Atridæ, that thy sufferings have thus enraged thee?

Neop. O that my hands had power to shew my resentments against them, that Mycenæ and Sparta might know Scyros brings forth brave men.

Phil. Therefore thus enraged art thou come to accuse them.

Neop. I will tell, but scarce can I tell, how I have been injured by them: for, after fate had decreed that Achilles should die——

Phil. Alas! say no more, ere first I learn if Achilles be dead.

Neop. He died by no man, but by the arrows of the god Apollo, as they say.

Phil. He was glorious both in life and death; I doubt whether I shall first talk of your sufferings, or deplore him.

Neop. I believe thou hast sufferings enough of thy own to lament, without those of thy friends.

Phil. Right, therefore tell me that deed, wherein they have injured thee.

Neop. Ulysses and Phœnix came to me attended with a numerous fleet, saying (whether it was true or false) that it was not possible, since my father was dead, Troy could be taken without me. When they had said this, they suffered me not to tarry long, ere I sailed away speedily; and I was ready to comply with their desire for this reason, chiefly, the longing I had to see my dead father, for I had not seen him living; besides, it were a glorious act, could I take Troy. After I had sailed two days, and with a prosperous voyage arrived at [g] sad Sigeum, the whole army standing round saluted me, and swore that Achilles, although dead, yet lived in me. He lay dead, but after unhappy I had lamented him a little while, going to the Atridæ, as it was fit I should, I demanded the armour of my father, and all things besides which belonged to him, but they returned me a most miserable answer: son of Achilles, whatever else belonged to thy father thou mayest take; but another man, the son of Laertes, hath his armour. Then I, weeping, rise up, incensed with dismal wrath, and grieving say: O hated wretches, dare you give my armour to any else besides me, without my leave? But Ulysses (for he was near) replied, they adjudged them to me, [h] for I preserved both them and him. I presently enraged against them, wished the saddest evils might befal them, leaving nought unsaid, if he robbed me of my armour. But he coming to me, though not in anger, yet pricked with what he had heard, answered: thou wast not with us, but wast absent

[g] *Sad Sigeum.*] He calls it sad Sigeum, because it was the place where his father met his fate.

[h] *For I preserved both them and him.*] It was said that Ulysses took the body of Achilles, and his armour, after he was slain, away from the Trojans. And Ovid brings him in boasting,

His humeris ego Corpus Achillis, &c.

where thou shouldst not have been; and since thus boldly thou sayest all this, thou shalt never carry them with thee to Scyros.

When I heard all this, I was vexed at the reproaches, and sailed home, deprived of my own by impious Ulysses. Nor do I accuse him as I do the chiefs, for the whole city and army belongs to governors, and delinquents are made wicked by their examples. I have said all. But he who hates the Atridæ, is beloved both by the gods and me.

ANTISTROPHICA STROPHE.

Cho. [i] Mountainous Rhea, earth, mother of Jove, who nourishest all things, who governest [k] great Pactolus, which slides on golden sands, thee, venerable mother, I invoke to revenge the injuries Neoptolemus hath suffered from the Atridæ; since, from the Atridæ all his afflictions proceeded, when they gave away his father's armour. O happy goddess, whose chariot is drawn by lions, supreme deity!

Phil. You have sailed hither, friends, with a certain token of your sorrow, and agree with me in acknowledging, that all these things come from the Atridæ and from Ulysses; for I know him to have a tongue expert in uttering all deceitful counsels and frauds, whereby he never designs to do justice:

[i] *Mountainous Rhea.*] Rhea is the same with the earth, who, because her sacred rites are performed in the mountains, is therefore called ὀρεσ-έρα, or ὀρεία, mountainous goddess. Homer calls her ξείδωρος. She had several other names, as Ops, Cybele, Dindymene, Bericynthia, Vesta, &c. She was worshipped by the Phrygians. The Chorus here invocates her to revenge the injury which Neoptolemus received of Agamemnon and his evil counsellors, in depriving him of his father's armour.

[k] *Great Pactolus, which slides on golden sands.*] Pactolus is a river of Lydia, which with the force of its streams brings down golden sands from the mountain Tmolus, from whence it flows. Whence Παχλωλὸν ἔυχρυσον. By the sands of this river Crœsus was said to have enriched himself.

wherefore that is no wonder to me. But I wonder that Ajax, the elder, (if he were by,) should suffer that.

Neop. He is no more: for, had he lived I had not been deprived of them.

Phil. What sayest thou; is he dead?

Neop. No more he sees the light.

Phil. Ah, me! nor the son of Tydeus, nor Ulysses, sold by Sisyphus to Laertes, are dead: for it is not fit that they should live.

Neop. No; but they flourish greatly in the Argian army.

Phil. How does my good old friend, Nestor, king of Pylos? for he forbid their wicked arts and gave good counsel.

Neop. He is now unhappy, for Antilochus, his son, is dead.

Phil. Woe is me, thou hast told me two misfortunes, that they are dead whom I above all wished to have lived; alas, what shall I now think since they are dead, but Ulysses lives, whom it was fitter should have died for them.

Neop. Ulysses is a prudent warrior, but wise counsels are often overcome.

Phil. Speak: tell me, by the gods, where was Patroclus then, who was your father's most beloved friend?

Neop. And he is dead: for, as in short I shall inform thee, unless it be by chance, the war destroys no wicked man, but always the good.

Phil. I agree with thee, therefore I will inquire of that unworthy man, but prudent and grave in speech; how is it with him?

Neop. Who is he but Ulysses, of whom thou speakest?

Phil. I say not him, but there was one [1]Thersites,

[1] *Thersites, who often used.*] He was slain by Achilles at the

who often used to speak when none endured to hear him: knowest thou if he still lives?

Neop. I have not seen him, but have heard he is still alive.

Phil. So it was to be, since nothing that is ill is gone. Ill things the gods take care of: but, if there be ought that is subtle and fraudulent, that they gladly preserve from death; but whatsoever things are just and good, those they always deliver to her. What can we judge in these things, or how commend the deeds of the gods, [m] since we find them bad?

Neop. Wherefore thou son of an Oetæan father, I, for the future looking at a distance, will avoid both Ilium and the Atridæ, for among whom a bad man can do more than a good, and every thing is oppressed that is good, and violence rules, I will no more respect such men. But rocky Scyros hereafter shall suffice for me, and I will content myself at home. Now I go to my ship; and thou farewell, may all prosperity attend thee, and may the gods free thee from thy disease, as thou desirest; but we will go, when God grants us a seasonable gale, then we will launch forth.

Phil. Dost thou now prepare for going?

Neop. Season now is near, and calls us to sail away.

Phil. Now, by thy father and thy mother, if there be ought dear to thee at home, humbly I beseech thee leave me not thus alone; forsaken in these ills in which thou seest me, and in those

same time when he slew Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons: for, after Achilles had slain her, Thersites struck her in the eye with his spear, for which Achilles was so enraged, that he beat out his brains with his fist.

[m] *Since we find them bad.*] It is no great wonder they should charge their gods with evil, since they were so familiarly conversant among them, even as to be present in their battles, and even direct those arrows which were cast by others. See Homer's Il. σ.

wherein thou hast heard I have been conversant; but lay me down in any mean place. I know I am troublesome, but then, nevertheless, bear with me; for generous minds hate any thing that is base, but delight in what is honourable. If you forsake me it will be a bad reproach to you; but, if you take me, much glory will be your reward, when I come safe to Oeta. I shall not be the burthen of a whole day: venture it, take me and lay me where thou wilt on the jakes, or on the prow, that I may as little as possible disturb others that are present. Yield to me, by Jupiter, guardian of suppliants; be persuaded; I prostrate myself, and grasp your knees, though I am weak, miserable, and lame; leave me not thus destitute without footstep of mankind, but either lead me safe into your country, or into Eubœa, and from thence my way to Oeta is not far, and the borders of Trachinium, and gently flowing Sperchius, that you may restore me to my beloved father, whom I have long feared lest he be dead. For, I have sent him many suppliant prayers by those who came hither, that he would send a ship and bring me safe home; but, either he is dead, or, which is most probable, the messengers making small account of my business, hastened home. But now I come to you as my conductor and my guardian angel, do thou save me, seeing how men lie exposed to many dangers, now they are in prosperity, now in adversity: but it becomes him who is free from troubles to look upon the afflicted. And when any one lives happily, then ought he to look to himself, lest some unforeseen accident destroy him.

ANTISTROPHE.

Cho. Pity him, O king, for he hath mentioned trials of many sad sufferings, which none of my friends ever did: but, if thou hatest the fierce Atridæ,

I, turning their evil to his advantage here, since he eagerly urges it, in a well-rigged nimble ship will go home, avoiding the vengeance of the gods.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Neoptolemus, Chorus, Philoctetes.

Neop. Beware lest thou art over easy, for when thou art tired with his distemper thou wilt not be the same.

Cho. By no means, thou shalt never have that to reproach me with.

Neop. It is a shame that I should seem behind thee in readiness to assist a stranger; therefore, if thou thinkest fit, we will sail, let him come quickly, the ship shall receive him, nor shall he be denied. Only may the gods conduct us safe out of this land, to whatsoever place we desire from hence to sail.

Phil. O joyful day! and thou most beloved of all men, and dear sailors, how shall I shew myself sufficiently grateful to you? let us go and salute my familiar habitation, that you may know upon what I have lived, and how patient I have been; for, I think that no other but me, who only takes a view of it with his eyes, would endure all this which I have done, but I am taught by necessity to bear it.

Cho. But wait that we may learn farther.—Two men, our ship-companion and another, approach, whom when you have heard, afterwards you shall go in.

ACT III. SCENE II.

One of the Chorus, one disguised like a Merchant, sent by Ulysses, Neoptolemus, Philoctetes.

Merch. [n] Son of Achilles, I commanded this my

[n] *Son of Achilles.*] Here entereth the servant of Ulysses,

companion, who was the keeper of your ship, to tell me where you were, since I have met with you contrary to my expectation as by accident I came to this country, sailing from Ilium [o] home to Pepareth with vines well planted, not with a large fleet; when I heard these were your sailors, I resolved, since I had met with my brother sailors, not to sail by in silence, ere I desired thee to sail away. Thou knowest nought of what concerns thee, what consultations the Argians have had about thee, and not only consultations, but some things have been acted.

Neop. Thanks to thee for thy kind admonition, and if I am no ill man, my well deserved grace attends thee. But speak, that I may know what new consultation of the Argians about me this is thou hast told me of.

Mer. Old Phœnix and [p] the sons of Theseus are gone out with their fleet, in pursuit of thee.

Neop. To bring me by force or persuasion?

Mer. I know not, but what I have heard I tell thee.

Neop. Doth Phœnix and his companions do this to gratify the Atridæ?

Mer. Be assured these things are now in hand, nor is there any delay.

Neop. Why doth not Ulysses take it in hand himself? Was he ready to have sailed hither, or would not his fear alone let him?

dressed in the habit of a merchant, as they had agreed upon before, who, feigning himself to come to the place by accident, alarms him with a false account of some pursuers, and whom he warns him to avoid; but his design was to bring him and Philoctetes to Ulysses's ship.

[o] *Home to Pepareth.*] Peparethus is one of the islands of the Cyclades, in the Ægean sea.

[p] *The sons of Theseus.*] Their names were Acamas and Demophoon. Homer mentions them not in his catalogue of Heroes.

Mer. He and Diomedes, when I came hither, sailed after another.

Neop. Whom?

Mer. It was one; but tell me first who this is, but speak not loud.

Neop. He is noble Philoctetes.

Mer. Now ask me no more, but with all speed launch forth, and convey thyself out of this country.

Phil. What says he? Why doth he privately betray me by his discourse to you?

Neop. I know not what he said, but he ought to say clearly what he says before thee, my friends, and myself.

Mer. O son of Achilles, betray me not to the army, since I speak what I ought not; for I have received of them much kindness.

Neop. I am an enemy to the Atridæ, but this my greatest friend, because he hates them. You ought, therefore, to conceal nothing from us of all you have heard, if it be acceptable.

Mer. Consider what you do.

Neop. I do consider.

Mer. I shall blame you for all this.

Neop. For what?

Mer. Those two men, as thou hast heard of, Diomedes and Ulysses, bound by oath, do sail against this man, to bring him away either by persuasion or by violence; and this all the Grecians heard Ulysses plainly say; for he of the two hath most boldness to do that deed.

Neop. On what account do the Atridæ, after so long time, regard Philoctetes, whom long before they rejected? Whence comes this their desire of him? Is it from the Gods, and Nemesis, who revenges vile deeds?

Mer. I will inform thee of all (for probably thou hast not heard it). There was a noble prophet, son

of Priam, his name was Helenus, whom this fraudulent Ulysses, (who never hears ought of himself but what is base and dishonourable,) going out alone by night, seized and bringing him prisoner, shewed all the Grecians his fine prey. This prophet, with many other things, prophesied to them, that they should never overcome Troy, unless prevailing upon this man, by persuasion, they lead him out of this island wherein he dwells. When the son of Laertes heard the prophet say this, immediately he promised he would bring him, he thought he could bring him by his own choice, but if not, to use violence, and promised that his head should pay the forfeit if he failed: thou hast heard all, therefore I advise you both hasten away, and if there be any other whom thou carest for.

Phil. Woe is me! Did that villain, that abstract of all ill, swear that he would persuade me to go to the Grecians? As soon I will be persuaded [q] that when I die I shall return again to life, as his father, Sisyphus, did.

Mer. That I know not, but I go to my ship, and may God grant you all good things.

ACT III. SCENE III.

Philoctetes, Neoptolemus, Chorus.

Phil. Is not this most unjust, that the son of Laertes hopes, with deluding words, to bring me to the Grecians? No; I would sooner hear my most

[q] *That when I die I shall return.*] To what was said before of Sisyphus, the father of Ulysses, this farther account is added, that upon his death-bed he charged his wife to leave his body unburied, which accordingly she did; whereupon he accused her to Pluto and Proserpine for not performing due funeral obsequies to his body, and obtained of them leave to return to life and revenge on her the affront; but when he came to life, he never returned until he was constrained by necessity.

bitter enemy, the viper who made me lame. But he says and dares all things, and now I know he will certainly come. Wherefore, O son, let us go, that the broad sea may divide us from Ulysses's ship. Let us go, for seasonable diligence at last brings ease and rest from labour.

Neop. When there is a fair wind; now it blows against us.

Phil. When you fly from evils, there is always good sailing.

Neop. Fear not, the winds oppose them too, (i. e. Ulysses and Diomedes.)

Phil. The winds never oppose pirates, when their time is for robbing and plundering.

Neop. If thou thinkest fit then, we will go; and bring with thee what thou hast need of and desirest.

Phil. There are some things that I have need of.

Neop. What is that which is not in my ship?

Phil. I have a leaf wherewith I always ease my wounds and mitigate my pain.

Neop. Bring it out; what other thing dost thou desire to take?

Phil. Alas! I suspect that I have left something that belongs to those bows; but leave it not for another to take.

Neop. Meanest thou those excellent bows?

Phil. The same; for I bear no other.

Neop. But may I take a view of them nearer, and carry them, and adore them as some god?

Phil. That shall be granted thee, and any thing else in my power that will be for thy profit.

Neop. I love this bow, but my love is thus; if it be just for me I will, if not excuse me.

Phil. Thou speakest piously; it is just for thee, by whose providence alone the light of the sun I see, the land of Oeta, my ancient father and my friends; and who, being under the power of my enemies, hast freed me from thence. Be confident

you may both touch these, return them to the giver, and boast that you alone of all men may touch them, for your virtue's sake: for it is for my good deeds I got them, nor am I grieved to see you touch them who art my friend; for he who hath been well used, knows how to use well his benefactor, and a friend is more precious than the greatest wealth.

Neop. Go in.

Phil. And I will introduce thee; for, being distempered, I have need of thee to assist me.

ACT III. SCENE IV.

Chorus.

STROPHE I.

I have heard but never saw it, that formerly [r] mighty Jove took Ixion, who attempted to corrupt his bed, and bound him a prisoner to a wheel, to be whirled round; but never heard or saw any other who suffered a more cruel fate than this man, who neither injured nor robbed any one, but a just man unworthily perishes: and I wonder at that, how alone, as a ship immersed in waves beaten on every side, he endured this lamentable life.

[r] *Mighty Jove took Ixion.*] He was the son of Phlegyas; the crime for which he is thus punished was his boasting he had corrupted Juno, but it was only a cloud in her shape, on which he begat the Centaurs. Tibul. lib. i. Eleg. 3.

Illic Junonem tentare Ixionis ausi
Versantur celeri noxia membra rotâ.

The offensive members of Ixion, who dared to tempt the chastity of Juno, are turned about on a nimble wheel. And Pindar Pyth. Od. ii.

——— Ἰξίονα
ἐν πλεόεντι τροχῷ πάλλα κυλινδόμενον.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Exposed to winds, having no power to go, nor any, even bad, neighbour to whom he may publish his sad and cruel grief, again to be repeated; nor any to assuage with soft leaves the warm ulcer of his wounded foot, or if any there should happen to be to bear him his food from the fruitful earth; but he creeps forth every where, dragging himself along as a child without his beloved nurse, where the ways are smooth, when his torturing pain will suffer him: nor, unless with arrows and trusty bow, gets he any food to eat; who for this ten years time hath not been delighted with one draught of wine, but looking where he can spy any standing water, he creeps to it to quench his thirst.

ANTISTROPHE II.

But now, meeting with noble Neoptolemus, will lead a happy life, and, from his past troubles, will become great; who, taking him into a sea-crossing ship, after many months will bring him into his father's country, to the nymphs of Melis and the banks of Sperchius, where Hercules passed to the celestial gods, burnt in a pile on the bank of Oeta.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Neoptolemus, Philoctetes, Chorus.

Neop. Go on, if thou wilt; why art thou thus silent for no cause, and thus amazed?

Phil. Alas! alas!

Neop. What is the matter?

Phil. No harm, but go on.

Neop. Do you restrain the violence of your approaching disease?

Phil. No, but I think [s] it is easier with me; O the gods!

Neop. Why, thus lamenting, dost thou invocate the gods?

Phil. That they would come to us as our kind deliverers; ah! ah!

Neop. What is that thou sufferest? Wilt thou not speak, but still continue thus in silence? Thou seemest to labour under some evil.

Phil. O I am lost: nor can I conceal my sorrow from you. Woe is me! it pierces me; alas! alas! I am undone, I am destroyed, &c. By the gods, if thou hast a sword ready at hand, smite my foot, cut it off with all speed; nor spare my life; go, my son.

Neop. What sudden thing is this? Why dost thou make all these clamours and lamentations?

Phil. O, child, thou knowest.

Neop. What is it?

Phil. Thou knowest.

Neop. What is the matter with thee?

Phil. I know not.

Neop. How dost thou mean thou knowest not?

Phil. Alas! Alas!

Neop. How terrible is the coming on of this disease.

Phil. So terrible it cannot be uttered. O pity me.

Neop. What shall I do?

Phil. Forsake me not, for fear of my disease: it comes by intervals, as wandering beasts for prey return home when they are filled.

Neop. Thou miserable man, through many toils thou art miserable: permit me to take hold of, and carry thee.

[s] *It is easier with me; O the gods.*] While he rejoices at the thoughts of his returning home to his country, still the pain of his distemper interrupts his joy.

Phil. By no means, but take my bow as thou didst ask me, until the present violence of my disease abates, keep and preserve these: sleep seizeth me when this disease comes on me, nor doth it cease before I sleep. Therefore, you must let me rest quietly; but, if they come in that time, I beseech you, by the gods, neither willingly or unwillingly, or by any art be overcome to yield them up to Ulysses, lest you kill both yourself and me, who am your suppliant.

Neop. Fear not, for by my consent they shall be common to none but thee and me. Therefore, give them me, and the good fortune too that attends them.

Phil. Behold, receive them, and beseech Envy, that they may not be to you the occasion of so much woe as they have been to me, and him who before me possessed them.

Neop. O the gods grant it be so, and grant us a prosperous voyage wheresoever God pleases to bear us, and where our ship arrives.

Phil. I fear you pray in vain: the blood pours from my wound afresh: I expect some sudden accident will happen. Woe is me! and woe again! O foot, what misery dost thou cause me. It comes, the pain approaches: woe is me! the disease continues, forsake me not. Alas! I wish this pain were fixed deep in thy breast, Ulysses. O ye two chiefs, Agamemnon and Menelaus, how could ye so long bear this distemper for my sake, nor banish me before? Woe is me! O death! death! why thus perpetually called upon every day, canst thou not come? O noble youth, consume me with this fire that burns in Lemnos, as once I did the son of Jove that service for this armour. What sayest thou, son? Why art thou silent? Where do thy thoughts wander?

Neop. I mourn and lament thy sufferings.

Phil. O son, be of good courage, as it comes

quick so it returns ; but I beseech you leave me not alone.

Neop. Fear not, we'll stay.

Phil. Wilt thou stay ?

Neop. Assure yourself of it.

Phil. Then I think it is improper to bind thee by oath.

Neop. It is not just that I go away without you.

Phil. Give me thy hand for a pledge of thy faith.

Neop. I do engage my promise ; I will stay.

Phil. This way, now this way.

Neop. Which way sayest thou?

Phil. Upwards.

Neop. Why dost thou rave again? Why dost thou look toward the sky?

Phil. Let me go, let me go.

Neop. Whither ?

Phil. Let me go.

Neop. I say I will not let thee go.

Phil. Thou wilt kill me, if thou touchest me.

Neop. I let thee alone, now how much wiser art thou?

Phil. O earth, receive a dying man as I am, for my disease [*he falls asleep*] suffers me no more to raise myself.

Neop. It is likely that sleep will soon seize the man, his head is reclined, sweat bedews all his whole body, and in the sole of his foot a black vein is broke: but let us suffer him, friends, so to lie quiet, until he falls asleep.

ACT IV. SCENE II.

Chorus, Neoptolemus.

Cho. O sleep, whom no pain nor grief can hurt; mayest thou, O king! who makest our life happy,

now favour us, and close his eyes in that darkness which now covers him. Come now, thou physician, sleep. O son, consider now where you will stay or go, or what counsel dost thou think to take? or what shall we stay for; opportunity, which overcomes the best counsels, now gives us great power.

Neop. He hears nothing; but I perceive that in vain we pursue our prey with arrows, without him to sail with us; the crown of victory must be from him; the god commanded to take him away: to make vain promises, even to the false, is a reproachful thing.

ANTISTROPHE.

Cho. The gods will see all; but of whatsoever you would answer me again, let your discourse be short; for in a distemper all men's sleep is fleeting, so that they may look behind. Consider then what is the most convenient thing you can do, and ponder with yourself what you will resolve upon. Knowest thou of whom I speak? If thou hadst the same opinion with him, *(i. e.* Ulysses) thou wouldst take him away. Even the prudent find some difficulties to know what to do in doubtful cases.

EPODOS.

The wind blows fair; his eyes are closed; he hath no power to help himself, but lies involved in darkness. This warm sleep is good for us, and he is neither master of his hands or feet; but he looks, he sees, he speaks like one drawing near his death: it is my care to take him. A deed done without fear is the noblest.

ACT IV. SCENE III.

Neoptolemus, Philoctetes, Chorus.

Neop. Be silent, nor let your courage fail. He moves his eyes, and raises his head.

Phil. O light! sleep's successor, faithless guardian of my hopes, and these strangers; I never had thought it, that you could with pity bear my sad sufferings, continuing and assisting me. The Atridæ, those good princes, could not easily bear that; but thou art of a generous nature, and art born of generous parents, therefore easily didst bear it, though infested with my noise and ill-savour. But now, since there is some intermission and rest from the disease, thou raise me up, and set me standing; that since my weakness hath left me, we may go to the ship, and not delay our sailing.

Neop. I rejoice that I see you, beyond my hope, free from pain, alive, and breathing; for there were some signs of thee which appeared and signified thy death; but now raise thyself. But, if it please thee better, these will bear thee; the labour will not grieve them, since it pleaseth both of us that they should do it.

Phil. I like that: then raise me up, since it is thy pleasure; but let them go, lest they be offended with the ill-savour too soon; for it will be trouble enough for them to live with me in the ship.

Neop. Be it so; then stand up and support thyself.

Phil. Fear not, I will raise myself according to my usual manner.

Neop. [t] Woe is me! what shall I do?

Phil. What is that? What speech was it thou hast dropped?

Neop. I know not how to direct my doubting judgment.

Phil. What dost thou doubt of? Wilt thou not tell me?

[t] *Woe is me! what shall I?*] Here Neoptolemus is uneasy, knowing with himself that he was about to deceive Philoctetes contrary to his natural disposition, and bring him to Troy, not to his country, as he had promised to do.

Neop. It is there I am perplexed with doubting.

Phil. Doth the difficulty of bearing my disease thus move thee, that thou wilt not take me a companion of thy voyage?

Neop. All things are difficult, when any forsaking his own nature, doth things that are unseemly.

Phil. Thou neither dost nor sayest ought unworthy of thy father, while thou dost assist a good man.

Neop. I shall shew myself vile; it is that disturbs me.

Phil. But not in what you say or do; yet I doubt.

Neop. O Jove! what shall I do? I shall be twice caught in my vileness, in concealing what I ought not, and speaking most wicked words.

Phil. This man, unless I am mistaken in my opinion, thinks to betray me, and, leaving me, to sail away.

Neop. I will not leave thee; but, rather lest with grief to thee, I take thee; it is that which grieves me.

Phil. What sayest thou? I understand thee not.

Neop. I will conceal nought from thee: thou must sail to Troy, to the Grecians, and the army of the Atridæ.

Phil. Ah me! What hast thou said?

Neop. Do not lament before you know.

Phil. Know what? How dost thou think to do with me?

Neop. First to ease you of your disease, then to go and destroy the Trojan land.

Phil. And dost thou think to do so?

Neop. Great necessity enforces it; wherefore be not angry, though now thou hast heard this.

Phil. I am undone, a wretch, betrayed. O stranger, what hast thou done to me? Deliver me my bow with speed.

Neop. But it is not fit I should; both law and interest oblige me to obey those in power.

Phil. [u] O fire and every terror, most odious fraudulent contrivance, what hast thou done to me? How hast thou deceived me? Art thou not ashamed to see me thy suppliant prostrate at thy feet? O cruel man, in taking away my bow, thou hast taken my life. Restore me them I beseech thee, restore me them, by my father's gods, [x] take not away my life. Ah me, a wretch! thou answerest me not, but he looks as if he would never restore them. O ye ports and promontories! O commerce, with mountainous beasts, and uneven rocks, I speak this to you; I have none else to speak to. I complain to you, you who were wont to hear my complaints, what the son of Achilles hath done to me. After he hath sworn to bring me home, he prepares to bring me back to Troy; and, after he gave his hand in pledge of his truth, hath taken away my bow, which Hercules, the son of Jove, hath given me, and will deliver me to the Grecians, as though he had overcome me, a brave man, by force: nor doth he know that he kills one already dead, or a vain shadow, a mere image. He could not have taken me had I my strength; since even as I am, he took me not but by fraud. But now, unhappy man, I am deceived; what must I do? Restore them to me: still be like thyself. What sayest thou? Art thou silent? I am undone, a wretch! O rock with a double door, again I return to thee naked, and destitute of food. Alone I shall die in this cave, nor shall I kill any winged fowl, or wild beast of the mountains with my bow; but dead myself, a wretch! I shall be food for

[u] *O fire and every terror.*] Gr. ὁ πῦρ σὺ. Spoken in allusion to Pyrrhus, one of Neoptolemus's names.

[x] *Take not away my life.*] Gr. τὸν βίον μή μ' ἀφέλῃς. A pretty allusion in the Greek, though it is not discerned in any other language. For βίος, life, is likewise Greek for a bow, the accent being changed thus βιὸς. Yet this is scarcely grave enough for this kind of poem, as I have noted in the tragedy of Ajax.

those I fed upon; and those I hunted before will hunt me now, and I shall repay my death as a recompense for theirs. This I have from him who seemed to think no ill. Yet, perish not before I know if thou wilt change thy mind; but if not, mayest thou miserably die.

Cho. What shall we do, O king? It is in thy power either to sail away, or obey his words.

Neop. Much pity for this man invades my breast, not now the first time, but before likewise.

Phil. Pity me, by the gods, nor make thyself a reproach to mankind by deceiving me.

Neop. Woe is me! what shall I do? Would I had never left Scyros; these things so afflict me.

Phil. Thou art not bad thyself, but art instructed by base men for these vile deeds; but now exercise those arts upon others who deserve it. Deliver me my armour, then sail away.

Neop. What must we do, my companions?

ACT IV. SCENE IV.

Ulysses, Philoctetes, Neoptolemus, Chorus.

Ulys. Thou worst of slaves, wilt thou not leave this bow with me?

Phil. Ah me! who is this? Do I hear Ulysses?

Ulys. It is him, be well assured of that; him whom you see.

Phil. Woe is me! I am sold, I am lost, undone. This is he who circumvented me, and stripped me of my armour.

Ulys. It was I, and none else; I own it.

Phil. O son, quit my bow, return it to me.

Ulys. Thou shalt not do that, though thou shouldst desire it. [*to Neoptolemus.*] But thou

must go with thy armour, or they will take thee by force.

Phil. Thou most vile audacious slave! will they take me by force?

Ulys. Aye, unless thou goest freely.

Phil. O land of Lemnos, and thou invincible light of Vulcan's fire! Are such things tolerable, as that he should bear me hence by violence?

Ulys. That you may know it, it is Jove who rules this land, by whom this was decreed; I am but minister of that decree.

Phil. O villain, what hast thou found out to say? Dost thou pretend the gods, and make them liars.

Ulys. No, but true; thou must go this way.

Phil. But I say I will not.

Ulys. But I affirm it; you must obey.

Phil. Woe is me! It is plain then my father begat me a slave, not a free man.

Ulys. No slave, but equal with the greatest princes with whom thou must take Troy, and destroy it by force.

Phil. It shall never be, though I suffer the worst of evils, while I have this deep cave to contain me.

Ulys. What wouldst thou do?

Phil. I will dash my head in pieces against this rock, then fall down headlong from it.

Ulys. Lay hands upon him; let not that be in his power. [*Ulysses's followers bind Philoctetes.*

Phil. O hands! what you endure for want of your beloved bow, bound by this man! O thou who, in thy thoughts, contrivest nothing, either good or worthy a free man; thou hast deluded me; how hast thou caught me, by sending this youth suborned by thee, to me unknown, unworthy to be like thee, but rather me; who knew how to do nothing, but as he was ordered: and now he seems to bear it with much grief, that he offended me, and that through him I have suffered. But thy base mind, always

looking through coverts, hath well instructed him against his will, unexpert before in frauds, to be wise in contriving wickedness. And now, having bound me, thinkest thou to take me from this shore, where before thou didst cast me, destitute of friends, forsaken, an exile, among the living, dead? Ah! mayest thou perish, and this I often wished might be thy fate; but the gods grant nothing pleasing to me. Thou livest joyfully, but I am overwhelmed with woe; and for this reason, that I live in many troubles derided by thee, and the two generals, sons of Atreus, whom thou servest in these deeds. Thou, for thy craftiness, which they respected, and by necessity their subject, didst sail with them. They, as thou sayest, cast me out a wretch, who willingly sailed hither commander of seven ships; but they accuse thee. And now why do you bring me hither, and then take me away? For what cause, who am no more, and, as for your part, am dead long since. Wherefore now, thou most hated of the gods, am I not lame, and ill-savoured to you? How will you pray to the gods to consume the sacrifices, if I sail with you? How will you make libations? For these were your pretences to cast me out. O, may you perish who thus have injured me, if the gods respect justice: but I know they do, for you had never sailed hither for the sake of a miserable man, unless some divine instigation, for my sake, had urged you to it. But, O my father's country and guardian gods, punish them all at last, if you commiserate me, who miserably live; for if I saw them perish, I should think myself free from my disease.

Cho. This stranger, Ulysses, is violent, and hath spoken a violent speech, nor doth he sink under his afflictions.

Ulys. I could say many things to him again, if it were convenient for me; but now one thing I will

say: when there needs such words, I am he that will speak them; and when there is a trial of just and good men, you shall find none a more righteous judge than me. I am used to overcome in every dispute wherein I am concerned, unless it be against thee; and now willingly I will submit to thee. Set him free, nor touch him more; let him stay here: we have no need of thee, since we have these arms. [y] We have Teucrus, who hath skill to use them; and myself, who think I am not behind thee in handling them, or directing them against a mark. What need, therefore, is there of thee? Farewell; do thou tread the land of Lemnos; but we will go, perhaps thy gift may gain me the honour which is due to thee.

Phil. Woe is me! what shall I do? Wilt thou, clad in my armour, appear among the Grecians?

Ulys. Contradict me no more; I go my way.

Phil. O son of Achilles, shall I not hear thy voice? Dost thou go hence?

Ulys. Go thy way, nor look towards him, though thou art noble, lest thou spoil our fortune.

Phil. And am I thus forsaken of you, O stranger? Shall I be left, nor will you pity me?

Cho. This is the governor of our ship; whatever he saith to thee, we say the same likewise.

Neop. I am blamed by him, (*i. e.* Ulysses,) that I am compassionate: yet stay, if it please him, for so long time while the sailors get all things ready for the ship, and we sacrifice to the gods; perhaps he in that time may change his mind for the better; then we will launch our ship, and do you come quickly when we call you.

[y] *We have Teucrus.*] Teucrus was particularly famous for his art in throwing darts, as appears both by this place and another in the Ajax: although Menelaus calls him there τοξότης in derision, when he contended with him about the burial of Ajax, in these words: "This archer seems not to think meanly of himself."

ACT IV. SCENE V.

Antistrophica Strophe I.

Philoctetes, Chorus.

Phil. O cave in the hollow rock, by turns hot and cold! I never must leave thee, but thou must serve me as my habitation, until I die. O habitation filled with my woe, what shall I do in my remaining days? What food shall I get? What hope will ever cheer me? O! I would the ravenous birds would in a mighty wind bear me up through the air, for longer I cannot sustain myself.

Strophe II.

Cho. Thou thyself, unhappy man, hast brought upon thee thy misfortune; it comes not any other way: when it is in thy power to be wiser, and enjoy a better and happier fortune, thou hadst rather be more unhappy.

Phil. O wretched me, worn out with sorrow; who live alone here, forsaken of all men, and shall perish in this den; nor shall I get more food, or shoot more birds with my bow, and stout hands. But he imposed upon me with the secret unseen fraud of his traitorous mind. Would I could see him who contrived this, for as long time sharing like pains with me.

Antistrophe II.

Cho. It was the fate of the gods, not the contrivance of my hands overcame you; forbear your inauspicious, odious, execrations against others; for that is my care, that you reject not my benevolence.

Strophe III.

Phil. Woe is me! now sitting somewhere on the hoary sand of the sea-shore, he laughs at me, brandishing in his hands my sustenance, whom none ever before carried. O, lovely bow, extorted out of

my hands, sure now if thou hast any thought, thou thinkest it a miserable case, that I should never hereafter use thee as Hercules did. The case is altered, thou art now put into the hands of a deceitful man, seest all his frauds, and a man most hated to me; and who, born of vile parents, hath done me innumerable wrongs.

Strophe IV.

Cho. It is the part of a good man to say the truth, and not to express malicious sorrow with his tongue: for he, being one who was from the army appointed to this business by the counsel of Ulysses, only lent his assistance to his friends.

Antistrophe III.

Phil. O ye birds, winged prey, and cheerful kind of mountain-wandering beasts, which this country contains, no more approach me with terror at these dens; for I have not in my hands the strength of my bow, which I had before. Ah me, a wretch! now this place is free and unregarded, and no more terrible to you. Approach, and fill yourselves with my flesh, for recompense of the wounds your flesh received of me. I shall soon leave my life; for whence shall I have necessary food? Who can feed upon the air, who hath nothing which our mother-earth affords?

Antistrophe IV.

Cho. Now, by the gods, if thou respectest strangers, receive Neoptolemus with all benevolence who joins himself to you; and know well, thou mayest avoid this calamity: he is unwise who chooses to live miserably and endure perpetual sorrow.

Phil. Again thou puttest me in mind of my former misfortunes. Why dost thou kill me? Why dost thou so?

Cho. Why dost thou say so?

Phil. Because thou thinkest to bring me back to hated Troy.

Cho. But I think that to be the best.

Phil. From henceforth leave me.

Cho. With joy I receive thy commands, and shall execute them: we will go to our ship as we are ordered.

Phil. Now, I beseech you, by [z] Jove, revenger of those who supplicate in vain, depart not hence.

Cho. Then be more gentle.

Phil. O strangers, by the gods, stay.

Cho. What sayest thou?

Phil. Alas! alas! I am undone, a wretch. O my foot, what shall I do with you the remaining part of my wretched life. Generous strangers, return again, I beseech you.

Cho. What shall we do, besides what you have already ordered? Is your mind changed?

Phil. It is not a fault for him that is afflicted with tumultuous sorrow, to roar like one besides himself.

Cho. Go with us now, thou wretch, as we desire thee.

Phil. By no means, that shall never be made good, though thundering fire-bearing Jove, with his thunderbolts, should consume me. May Troy perish, and all those who are at it, who could bear to reject me for the ulcer of my foot. But, O strangers, grant me this petition.

Cho. What is that thou sayest?

Phil. If thou hast any sort of armour, give it me.

Cho. What slaughter wouldst thou commit?

Phil. I will cut off my head and feet with my hands; the pain of my disease requires it.

[z] *Jove, revenger of those who supplicate in vain.*] There were among the ancients, as hath been noted, as many Joves to pray to as their several circumstances which they were in: so Jove ἀρᾶιος, was he whom they invocated, when they desired a thing earnestly of another.

Cho. How?

Phil. I will seek my father.

Cho. Where?

Phil. Among the dead; for he sees the light no more. O my father's city! O that I could but behold you, who, forsaking your sacred religion, went an assister to the hostile Grecians.

Cho. I had gone before to my ship, only that I saw Ulysses, the son of Achilles, coming to us.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Ulysses, Neoptolemus, Chorus.

Ulys. Will you not tell for what reason you return back so quick?

Neop. To expiate my offences, which before I committed.

Ulys. You tell us a sad thing, but what was the offence?

Neop. My obeying thee and the whole army.

Ulys. What act hast thou done unworthy of thyself?

Neop. I deceived the man with vile fraud and tricks.

Ulys. What, alas! do you design any new thing?

Neop. Nothing new but for Philoctetes.

Ulys. What wilt thou do? How fear comes upon me?

Neop. From whom I have received this bow, again to him——

Ulys. O Jove! what sayest thou? Dost thou think to return it?

Neop. I received it basely, and not according to justice.

Ulys. By the gods, dost thou say this only to torment my heart?

Neop. Ay, if it be a torment to thee to speak truth.

Ulys. What sayest thou?

Neop. Will you have me twice and thrice repeat the same words?

Ulys. I had rather hear them not once.

Neop. Assure thyself thou hast heard all.

Ulys. But there is somebody who will hinder thee from doing that.

Neop. What sayest thou? Who is there that will hinder me?

Ulys. The whole Grecian army and myself.

Neop. Though thou art a wise man, thou speakest not wisely.

Ulys. Thou neither speakest nor actest wisely.

Neop. But, if justly, my actions are better than the most wise contrivances.

Ulys. How is it just to return those things again, which you got by my counsel?

Neop. I have committed a base fault, and that I will endeavour to undo.

Ulys. Dost thou not fear the army of the Grecians that thou darest do this?

Neop. When I do justice, I fear not like thee; nor do I think they will make me fear by your power.

Ulys. Therefore we will not fight with the Trojans, but thee.

Neop. Come what will.

Ulys. Seest thou my right hand upon the hilt of my sword?

Neop. And thou shalt see me do the like without delay.

Ulys. But I will let thee alone, and tell this to all the Grecians, who will punish thee.

Neop Thou art wise, and if hereafter thou will always be wise, thou mayest lead a life free from sorrow. But thou, O son of Pœan, come out, and leave thy rocky cave.

ACT V. SCENE II.

Philoctetes, Neoptolemus, Ulysses.

Phil. What clamorous noise is this before my den? Why do you call me out? What, strangers, do you want? Alas! why will you add more evils to my former?

Neop. Be of good courage, hear what I say to thee.

Phil. I fear, alas! for I have suffered before by fair speeches, when I was persuaded by thee.

Neop. But may not one repent?

Phil. Such a faithful man before thou didst feign thyself to be; but privately wast my enemy, when thou didst rob me of my bow.

Neop. But now I am not, but would know of thee whether thou wilt stay here or sail along with us.

Phil. Cease, speak no more, for whatsoever thou sayest will be said in vain.

Neop. Art thou so determined?

Phil. And beyond what I speak.

Neop. I would have thee be persuaded by my words; but, if I speak not seasonably, I will be silent.

Phil. It will all be said in vain, thou wilt never find my mind well disposed towards thee, who hast taken away my life by frauds, and now thou comest to admonish me, the most traiterous son of the best of fathers. First may the Atridæ perish, then the son of Laertes, and lastly thou.

Neop. Curse no more, but receive these arrows of my hands.

Phil. How sayest thou; am I deceived a second time?

Neop. I have swore it by the supreme deity of Jove.

Phil. Most sweet words, if what thou sayest be true.

Neop. The truth shall be made appear; extend thy right hand and take hold of thy armour.

Ulys. I forbid it, (witness the gods,) in the name of the Atridæ, and the whole army.

Phil. O son, whose voice is this? Do I hear Ulysses?

Ulys. Be assured of it, thou seest him near who will bring thee to Troy by force, whether the son of Achilles will or not.

Phil. But thou shalt have no reason to rejoice, if this arrow be rightly directed.

Neop. Ah! by no means, I beseech thee, by the gods, cast not forth thy arrow.

Phil. I beseech thee let go my hand.

Neop. I cannot let thee go.

Phil. Why wilt thou hinder me from killing with my arrows one who is my enemy?

Neop. That would be neither for my good, nor yours.

Phil. This be well assured of, that the chiefs of the Grecian army are vain talkers, bold in words, but cowards in fight.

Neop. Be it so; thou hast thy bow, and canst not accuse or be angry with me.

Phil. I own it, thou hast shewn thy natural disposition, that thou art not descended of a deceitful Sisyphus, but Achilles; who, while he was among the living, was always praised, and now is praised among the dead.

Neop. I am glad thou praisest my father and me. Now hear what I would have thee do. It is necessary that all men should bear those fortunes which are allotted them by the gods; but those who are oppressed by voluntary sufferings, as thou art, deserve no pardon nor pity. But thou art so fierce that thou wilt admit of none to counsel thee. And

if any one out of benevolence admonishes thee, thou hatest him, and lookest on him as thy cruel enemy. Yet will I speak: I call Jove, the punisher of perjury, for my witness; know this, and write it in thy mind, it is by divine appointment thou sufferest this disease, when thou didst approach the unseen serpent, who guarded the open temple of Minerva; and know that thou wilt never find a remedy for this grievous disease, as long as this sun riseth here and sets again, ere thou goest to Troy, and there, meeting with the sons of Æsculapius, who are with us, thou art healed by them of thy disease; and with me and those darts overthrowest Troy. I will tell thee how I know this to be true. There is a certain Trojan, taken by us, his name is Helenus, an excellent prophet, who plainly says it must be so. And, moreover, added, that of necessity this summer Troy must be taken, and freely gives us leave to kill him if he speaks false. Therefore, since thou knowest this, submit freely; it is a noble treasure to be reckoned most excellent of all the Grecians. Then by a physician to be healed of thy disease; then, by taking miserable Troy, to obtain supreme glory.

Phil. O hated life! why dost thou suffer me to live here, nor wilt dismiss me to my grave? Ah me! What shall I do? How shall I distrust his words who in benevolence exhorts me? Shall I submit? But, if I do, how shall I ever hereafter behold the light? To whom shall I call? O ye celestial orbits who encompass and behold all things, can you endure this, that I should be with the sons of Atreus who have undone me, and the pernicious son of Laertes? For the grief of those things that are past do not so much torment me; but what I must still suffer from them, my imagination represents before my eyes. For those who have a corrupt mind do every thing agreeably thereto. But I wonder at

thee, for thou neither oughtest to go to Troy thyself, but to hinder me from going, since they have injured thee, robbing thee of thy father's honour, and in the trial for his armour, rejected wretched Ajax, and judged them to Ulysses. Such are they thou goest to help, and wouldst force me to it. No, my son, but lead me into my country, as thou hast sworn; and thyself resting in Scyros, suffer them miserably to perish: so shalt thou receive double thanks of me and of my father; and not, by helping base men, seem yourself to be like them.

Neop. Thou sayest right, yet I would have thee believe the gods and my speeches; and, together with my present friend, sail out of this land.

Phil. What! to Troy, and the hated son of Atreus?

Neop. To them indeed, but yet to those who will heal thy corrupted foot, and free thee from thy disease.

Phil. O most afflicting words! What sayest thou?

Neop. What is convenient for both of us.

Phil. In saying thus dost thou not reproach the gods?

Neop. I reproach not those whom I assist.

Phil. Sayest thou it is an advantage to the Atridæ or to me?

Neop. To thee, since I am thy friend, and so are my words, too, friendly.

Phil. How? Since thou wouldst betray me to my enemies.

Neop. O my friend, learn in adversity to be humble.

Phil. Thou killest me; I understand thee and thy words.

Neop. Nay; but I say thou dost not understand.

Phil. I know that the Atridæ have banished me.

Neop. But what if they have banished thee; they will again restore thee.

Phil. Not by willingly returning to Troy.

Neop. What then shall I do? If my words are of such small force in persuading thee, nought remains but that I hold my peace, and suffer thee to live as thou dost, without cure.

Phil. Let me suffer my allotted portion of afflictions; but what thou didst promise, and to confirm thy promise didst give me thy hand, that thou wouldst safely conduct me to my country, that I would have thee perform. Nor think more of Troy; for I have lamented enough.

TROCHÆ.

Neop. If that please thee, then let us go.

Phil. O sweet words.

Neop. Now stand firmly on thy feet.

Phil. As well as I can.

Neop. But how shall I escape the accusation of the Grecians?

Phil. Regard not that.

Neop. But what if they destroy my country?

Phil. I will help.

Neop. How wilt thou assist?

Phil. With the arrows of Hercules.

Neop. What sayest thou?

Phil. I will hinder them from invading thy country.

Neop. If thou wilt do as thou sayest, come and salute the earth.

ACT V. SCENE THE LAST.

Hercules descends, and hangs in the air, borne upon a cloud.

Her. O son of Pæas, go not hence ere thou hearest my words, and knowest that it is the voice of Hercules thou hearest, and his presence which

thou seest. It is for thy sake I come, leaving my celestial mansions, to speak to thee great Jove's decrees, and to hinder thee from going the way thou art in: therefore, hear my words.

First of all, I will tell you the whole series of my fortunes. After many toils and labours I have at last obtained immortal honour, as thou mayest see: and be well assured it is ordained, that thou must suffer the same, and by thy toils gain a glorious life, by going along with this man to the city of Troy. First, thou shalt be healed of thy sad disease, and for thy virtue shalt be honoured above all the rest of the army; shalt, with my darts, slay Paris, who was the cause of all these evils; shalt lay Troy waste, and shall send home the spoils thereof, the purchase of thy virtue, chosen out for thee in the army, to thy father, Pæas, to the land of Oeta. But some of the spoils thou receivest from the army, thou shalt bear and lay them as monuments at my funeral pile. Moreover, son of Achilles, I give thee this precaution, that thou neither canst take Troy without him, nor he without thee; but, as two lions that pasture together, do thou guard him, and he shall thee. I will send Æsculapius to Ilium, who will heal thee of thy sore; it must be overcome the second time with my arrows.

But when thou layest waste the land [a] remember

[a] *Remember to revere all sacred things.*] This precept was broke by Neoptolemus, who slew Priamus when he fled for sanctuary to the altar of Jupiter Herkius; as likewise by Ajax Oïleus, impiously violating Cassandra, daughter of Priamus, at the altar of Pallas; wherefore, in his return from Troy, his ship was split by a tempest, and himself, after he had swam to a rock, was struck dead with thunder. Horace says, that Pallas was so enraged at the impiety of that act, that she turned all her anger, which she had before bore against Troy, against Ajax's ship.

Cum Pallas usto vertit iram ab Ilio,
In ipiam Ajacis ratem.

to revere all sacred things. Jove esteems all things inferior to them, for the piety of men dies not with them, but whether they live or die, that is immortal.

Phil. O charming voice, which now after long time appearing, thou hast sent me, I will not disobey thy counsels.

Neop. And I will submit to thy opinion.

Her. Delay not, therefore; the proper season calls, and at the very ship's stern provokes your sailing.

Phil. Go, therefore, salute this land. Farewell, O house, my constant keeper, the nymphs of the marshes, and the hideous noise of the rising seas, where oftentimes my head within my cave was wet with the battering wind-driven showers, and oftentimes the mount sacred to Mercury echoed back to me my reiterated mourning voice, when I was tempest-beaten. And now, O fountains and sweet waters, I forsake you, which thing I never thought of. Farewell, O land of Lemnos, near the sea, dismiss me with a prosperous voyage, where resistless fate calls me, the will of my friends, and the invincible god which brought these things thus to pass.

Cho. Now let us go all together, beseeching the nymphs of the sea safely to conduct us in our voyage.

THE END.

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